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No. 151

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOLF).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 28, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable FRANK R. WOLF to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair would now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 01 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:
Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

On this day, we ask Your blessing on the men and women, citizens all, whose votes have populated this people's House. Each Member of this House has been given the sacred duty of representing them.

O Lord, we pray that those with whom our Representatives met during this past weekend in their home districts be blessed with peace and an assurance that they have been listened to.

We ask Your blessing now on the Members of this House, whose responsibility lies also beyond the local interests of constituents, while honoring them. Give each Member the wisdom to represent both local and national interests, a responsibility calling for the wisdom of Solomon. Grant them, if You will, a double portion of such wisdom.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HARRIS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PROMISES MATTER

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, promises matter.

Time and again, President Obama said:

If you like your insurance plan, you will keep it. No one will be able to take that away from you.

My constituent Michael knows better. His family plan is being canceled. Next year, he and his expectant wife could see their monthly insurance payments rise from \$324 to \$895. Michael told me:

It is now impossible for our family to afford private health insurance.

On January 1, as many as 16 million Americans will have the coverage they are familiar with yanked out from under them. Too many will be caught between a rock and a hard place—struggling to afford pricier plans without the guarantee of subsidies but with the threat of tax.

Yes, today, we all know better. If you like your insurance, you won't necessarily get to keep it because President Obama and 279 congressional Democrats chose to pass a flawed law that, for many, strips the choice away.

IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, The Augusta Chronicle lead editorial on Saturday hit the nail on the head, pointing out the real truths about the ObamaCare train wreck. Americans remember a "soothing assurance from President Obama in 2009 when he was hawking his Affordable Care Act to the masses—if you like your health care plan, you can keep

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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your health care plan. Now tell that to the hundreds of thousands of Americans who already have received letters from health plans essentially telling them, "You're on your own."

As the failed rollout of ObamaCare continues, American families are beginning to see its disastrous impacts—and this is just the beginning. In the coming weeks, more reports will reveal their President's signature health care law will increase premium rates; force employers to cut back on workers' hours, destroying jobs; and terminate existing policies for needy families.

Congress must address this issue. The House has acted. The Senate must do the same to protect every American family from an unsustainable disaster.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

BROKEN PROMISES

(Mr. HARRIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, the White House Web site claims:

If you like your plan, you can keep it, and you don't have to change a thing due to the health care law.

Well, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Maryland said that 76,000 customers in Maryland will lose their current plans because of ObamaCare; in New Jersey, 800,000; in Florida, 300,000; and in California, at least 119,000 will see their policies terminated. It is happening everywhere.

Dana from Denton called my office to tell me she will not be able to keep her Blue Cross & Blue Shield plan because of ObamaCare. The new plan she is required to get will increase her premiums by \$350 a month.

Alex from Manchester told me his letter from Blue Cross & Blue Shield said:

The ACA requires you to pick a new plan to maintain coverage because your current plan will cease to exist at the time of your renewal.

Alex's family will have to pay \$300 more per month for the new plan.

Mr. Speaker, the President made a promise to the American people that they would be able to keep their plans. We now know that this is just not true.

JOURNALISTS WRONGLY CHANGE THEIR CODE OF ETHICS

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Society of Professional Journalists has given Americans some bad news about the state of the media. Their previous code of ethics specifically affirmed that:

News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue.

This line has been removed. In fact, the revised code makes no mention that news reports should be free of bias.

How can we expect journalists to cover events in a fair and objective way when their own code of ethics no longer discourages biased reporting? Maybe that explains the slanted coverage we see so often today when news stories have become editorials.

The Society of Professional Journalists should reclaim their ethics and restate their commitment to fair and balanced reporting. The media should provide the American people with the facts, not tell them what to think.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE HONORABLE C.W. BILL YOUNG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 384, and the order of the House January 3, 2013, the Speaker on October 24, 2013, appointed the following Members of the House to the committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable C.W. Bill Young:

The gentlewoman from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN

The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. BOEHNER

The members of the Florida delegation:

Ms. CORRINE BROWN

Mr. HASTINGS

Mr. MICA

Mr. CRENSHAW

Mr. MILLER

Mr. DIAZ-BALART

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

Mr. BILIRAKIS

Mr. BUCHANAN

Ms. CASTOR

Mr. POSEY

Mr. ROONEY

Mr. DEUTCH

Mr. NUGENT

Mr. ROSS

Mr. SOUTHERLAND

Mr. WEBSTER

Ms. WILSON

Mr. GRAYSON

Mr. DESANTIS

Ms. FRANKEL

Mr. GARCIA

Mr. MURPHY

Mr. RADEL

Mr. YOHO

Other Members in attendance:

Mr. CANTOR

Ms. PELOSI

Mr. HOYER

Mr. MCCARTHY, California

Mr. YOUNG, Alaska

Mr. SENSENBRENNER

Mr. ROGERS, Kentucky

Mr. WOLF

Mr. VISCLOSKEY

Mr. BISHOP, Georgia

Mr. CALVERT

Mr. MCKEON

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN

Ms. JACKSON LEE, Texas

Mr. LATHAM

Mr. PRICE, North Carolina

Mr. ADERHOLT

Ms. GRANGER

Mr. SESSIONS

Mr. CARTER

Mr. COLE

Mr. KING, Iowa

Mr. GOHMERT

Mr. ROE, Tennessee

Mr. NUNNELEE

Mr. WOMACK

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1601

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 4 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3304) to authorize and request the President to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins and Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict and to authorize the award of the Medal of Honor to certain other veterans who were previously recommended for award of the Medal of Honor.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3304

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION AND REQUEST FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO BENNIE G. ADKINS FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in section 3744 of title 10, United States Code, or any other time limitation with respect to the awarding of certain medals to persons who served in the Armed Forces, the President is authorized and requested to award the Medal of Honor under section 3741 of such title to Bennie G. Adkins of the United States Army for the acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.—The acts of valor referred to in subsection (a) are the actions of then Sergeant First Class Bennie G. Adkins of the United States Army serving with Special Forces Detachment A-102 from March 9 to 12, 1966, during the Vietnam Conflict for which he was originally awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION AND REQUEST FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO DONALD P. SLOAT FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in section 3744 of title 10, United States Code, or any other time limitation with respect to the awarding of certain medals to persons who served in the Armed Forces, the President is authorized and requested to award the Medal of Honor under section 3741 of such title to Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army for the acts of valor during the Vietnam Conflict described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.—The acts of valor referred to in subsection (a) are the actions of then Specialist Four Donald P. Sloat of the United States Army serving with 3rd Platoon, Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division on January 17, 1970, during the Vietnam Conflict.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO FORMER MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED FOR AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR.

Section 552(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Public Law 107-107; 10 U.S.C. 3741 note) is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” after “HONOR.—”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) In addition to the authority provided by paragraph (1), a Medal of Honor may be awarded to a veteran of the Armed Forces who, although not a Jewish-American war veteran or Hispanic-American war veteran described in subsection (b), was identified during the review of service records conducted under subsection (a) and regarding whom the Secretary of Defense submitted, before January 1, 2014, a recommendation to the President that the President award the Medal of Honor to that veteran.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material into the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3304. This bill would waive the time limit for the President to consider awarding the Medal of Honor to a handful of American heroes. The battlefield actions of these brave Americans have undergone a thorough review by the Department of Defense and have

been determined to merit consideration for our Nation's highest honor.

Among those heroes who would be considered under this bill is Mr. Bennie Adkins of Opelika, Alabama. In 1966, while serving in Vietnam, then-Sergeant First Class Bennie Adkins was assigned to Special Forces Detachment A-102 at Special Forces Camp A Shau in the Republic of Vietnam. From March 9 to March 12 of that year, he displayed extraordinary bravery during a sustained and well-coordinated attack from a determined, vicious, and highly lethal Viet Cong force. Though recommended at the time by his chain of command for the Medal of Honor, he received, instead, the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions.

His citation read:

When the camp was attacked by a large Viet Cong force, Sergeant First Class Adkins rushed through intense hostile fire and manned a mortar position. Although he was wounded, he ran through exploding mortar rounds and dragged several of his comrades to safety.

When the hostile fire subsided, Sergeant First Class Adkins exposed himself to sporadic sniper fire and carried his wounded comrades to the camp dispensary. During the evacuation of a seriously wounded American, Sergeant First Class Adkins maneuvered outside the camp walls to draw fire and successfully cover the rescue.

During the early morning hours of 10 March 1966, a Viet Cong regiment launched its main attack. Within 2 hours, Sergeant First Class Adkins was the only man firing a mortar weapon. Although he was painfully wounded and most of his crew was killed or wounded, he fought off the fanatical waves of attacking Viet Cong. After withdrawing to a communications bunker where several Americans were attempting to fight off a company of Viet Cong, Sergeant First Class Adkins killed numerous insurgents with his suppressive fire.

Running extremely low on ammunition, he returned to the mortar pit, gathered the vital ammunition, and ran through intense fire back to the communications bunker. After being ordered to evacuate the camp, all signal equipment and classified documents were destroyed. Sergeant First Class Adkins and a small group of men fought their way out of the camp and evaded the Viet Cong for 2 days until they were rescued by a helicopter.

Sergeant First Class Adkins' extraordinary heroism in close combat against a numerically superior hostile force was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Mr. Adkins continued his stellar military career until he retired in 1977 at the rank of sergeant major. Mr. Adkins also served a term as the national commander of the Legion of Valor.

Following a thorough review of Mr. Adkins' actions in battle by the Department of Defense, Secretary of Defense Hagel recently wrote to Congress that Mr. Adkins' actions merited the Medal of Honor and that, if Congress would waive the time requirement, he would recommend to President Obama that the President should award the Medal of Honor to Mr. Adkins.

As such, Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD a letter from Secretary Hagel.

This bill would also allow Mr. Donald Sloat to be considered for the Medal of Honor. On January 17, 1970, while serving in Vietnam, then-Specialist Donald Sloat, a machine gunner with Company D, Second Battalion, First Infantry Regiment, 196th Light Infantry, Americal Division, was killed while saving the lives of his squad members by drawing an enemy grenade to his body and shielding them from the blast. For his ultimate sacrifice to save his fellow soldiers, the DOD determined that Mr. Sloat's actions merited consideration for the Medal of Honor.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to commend the Department of Defense for completing the review of Jewish and Hispanic American veterans going back to World War II in order to correct an injustice to deserving members of our military who risked their lives for their country but whose actions were overlooked due to their ethnicities and religions. While conducting this review, the Department discovered seven individuals who did not meet the exact criteria of the congressionally mandated review but who, nevertheless, were deserving of the Medal of Honor. This bill would allow them to be recognized with the Nation's highest award for valor.

It is important to note that none of these brave Americans asked for this renewed consideration. It was through the advocacy and admiration of loved ones and of those who served with them that led to this effort.

For those brave Americans who show such extraordinary heroism in defense of our liberties, it is never too late to say thank you. To Mr. Adkins and Mr. Sloat and to all of the brave Americans like them, I say thank you.

I reserve the balance of my time.

PENTAGON,

Washington, DC, June 7, 2013.

Hon. MIKE ROGERS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: I am writing in response to your request for award of the Medal of Honor to then-Sergeant First Class (SFC) Bennie G. Adkins under the provisions of section 1130 of title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), “Consideration of proposals for decorations not previously submitted in timely fashion: procedures for review.”

I reviewed the proposal for award of the Medal of Honor to then-SFC Bennie G. Adkins for his valorous acts from March 9 to March 12, 1966, during the Vietnam Conflict. After giving the nomination careful consideration, I believe then-SFC Bennie G. Adkins' actions merit award of the Medal of Honor. However, section 3744 of title 10, U.S.C., requires that the Medal of Honor be awarded “within three years after the date of the act justifying the award.” Therefore, a statutory time waiver to section 3744 of title 10, U.S.C. is required before the President of the United States may, if he so chooses, award the Medal of Honor to then-SFC Bennie G. Adkins.

The final award authority for the Medal of Honor rests solely with the President of the United States. My favorable determination in no way presumes what the President's decision might be.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. A similar letter is being sent to the Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees on Armed Services.

Sincerely,

CHUCK HAGEL,
Secretary of Defense.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 3304, introduced by my friend and colleague, Mr. DEUTCH of Florida.

H.R. 3304 authorizes the President of the United States to award the Medal of Honor to Bennie G. Adkins, Donald P. Sloat, Melvin Morris, Ardie Copas, Jack Weinstein, Leonard Kravitz, Alfred Nietzel, Donald Schwab, and William Leonard.

These individuals have distinguished themselves in service to our Nation in previous conflicts, ranging from World War II to Vietnam. The individuals were reviewed by the appropriate services, and their nominations were given careful consideration by the Secretary of Defense, and their names have been submitted to the Congress.

Section 3744 of title X, United States Code, requires the Medal of Honor to be awarded within 3 years after the date of the act justifying the award, which is why we are here on the floor—to seek a statutory time waiver to allow the President of the United States to award the Medal of Honor to these particular individuals. So I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH), the author of this bill.

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank my friend, the gentlelady from Guam.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3304. I was pleased to work with my colleagues, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BRIDENSTINE of Oklahoma, and Mr. ROONEY of Florida, on this bill; and I appreciate the work that they do on behalf of our veterans and the men and women who serve our country today.

This legislation will waive the time limitation to allow the award of the Medal of Honor to two brave men, Bennie G. Adkins, a constituent of Mr. ROGERS', and Donald P. Sloat, a constituent of Mr. BRIDENSTINE's. I sincerely appreciate my colleagues' support and the support of the House Armed Services Committee in the effort to bring this legislation to the floor today.

This legislation will also allow the award of the Medal of Honor to several other deserving veterans. This bill represents the culmination of a long fight to remedy discrimination against Jewish American and Hispanic American veterans of our Armed Forces who, in spite of their acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty, may have been overlooked as being deserving of the Medal of Honor.

Over 12 years ago, this important effort began because Mitch Libman, a

close friend of Leonard Kravitz', made it known that then-Private First Class Kravitz may have been improperly bypassed for the Medal of Honor. After sacrificing his life in combat in Korea, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross with the following citation:

Upon order to withdraw, Private Kravitz voluntarily remained to provide protective fire for the retiring elements. Traversing the gun to the left to cover the infiltrating enemy and ignoring the pleadings of his comrades to fall back, he fearlessly maintained his position. Detecting a column of Communist troops moving toward friendly positions, he swept the hostile soldiers with deadly accurate fire, killing the entire group. His destructive retaliation caused the enemy to concentrate vicious fire on his position and enabled the friendly elements to effect a withdrawal.

Leonard Kravitz bravely gave his life for the men fighting at his side and for his country. In spite of his acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty, Kravitz was not awarded the Medal of Honor. In fact, when Mr. Libman came forward to share Mr. Kravitz' story, no Jewish American veteran had been recommended to receive the Medal of Honor for service in Korea. To ensure that this disparity was not the result of discrimination, Congress required each military department to conduct a review of veteran files to identify any deserving veteran who may have been overlooked for the Medal of Honor. This review has ensured that our highest military honor will be awarded based only on the acts of valor and courage displayed in battle and that no veteran will be denied the Medal of Honor as a result of his or her religion, race, or heritage.

I am extremely proud of the long, rich history of Jewish Americans and Hispanic Americans serving in our Armed Forces. Over half a million Jewish Americans fought for the United States in World War II, and 11,000 of them perished while fighting for this country. Jewish Americans have served with distinction in Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and countless other missions around the globe. Hispanic Americans have a proud history of military service stretching back to the Revolutionary War. Over 1 million Latino veterans have served courageously in our Armed Forces. Hispanic Americans and Jewish Americans are among the brave young men and women who have stepped forward to serve our Nation in our most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Members of both of these communities have fought for America's freedom and have had to fight to ensure that they receive the respect and honor they are owed for their service. The review of hundreds of service records resulted in the recommendation of the award of the Medal of Honor to at least seven veterans, including Mr. Kravitz.

I want to thank all of those at the Department of Defense who diligently reviewed their records to make certain that we properly recognize all of the

brave veterans deserving of the Medal of Honor.

□ 1615

The President of the United States, Mr. Speaker, has awarded the Medal of Honor to 3,471 of our finest Americans over the course of our Nation's history. With the passage of this bill, the President will be authorized to add Bennie G. Adkins, Donald P. Sloat, and at least seven other veterans whose heroic acts can at last receive the highest honor that they richly deserve.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support the passage of this legislation.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I have no further requests to speak, so I am prepared to close with an urging to my colleagues that they vote in favor of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, but I do want to commend the author of this bill, this very worthwhile piece of legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3304.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VULNERABLE VETERANS HOUSING REFORM ACT OF 2013

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1742) to exclude from consideration as income under the United States Housing Act of 1937 payments of pension made under section 1521 of title 38, United States Code, to veterans who are in need of regular aid and attendance, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1742

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. EXCLUSION FROM INCOME.

Paragraph (4) of section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking "and any amounts" and inserting "any amounts";

(2) by striking "or any deferred" and inserting "any deferred"; and

(3) by inserting after "prospective monthly amounts" the following: "and any expenses related to aid and attendance as detailed under section 1521 of title 38, United States Code".

SEC. 3. UTILITY ALLOWANCES AND DATA.

Section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(D) UTILITY ALLOWANCE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—In determining the monthly assistance payment for a family under subparagraphs (A) and (B), the amount allowed for tenant-paid utilities shall not exceed the appropriate utility allowance for the family unit size as determined by the public housing agency regardless of the size of the dwelling unit leased by the family.

“(ii) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), upon request by a family that includes a person with disabilities, an elderly family, or a family that includes any person who is less than 18 years of age, the public housing agency shall approve a utility allowance that is higher than the applicable amount on the utility allowance schedule, except that in the case of a family that includes a person with disabilities, the agency shall approve such higher amount only if a higher utility allowance is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by the family member with a disability.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(21) UTILITY DATA.—

“(A) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall, to the extent that data can be collected cost effectively, regularly publish such data regarding utility consumption and costs in local areas as the Secretary determines will be useful for the establishment of allowances for tenant-paid utilities for families assisted under this subsection.

“(B) USE OF DATA.—The Secretary shall provide such data in a manner that—

“(i) avoids unnecessary administrative burdens for public housing agencies and owners; and

“(ii) protects families in various unit sizes and building types, and using various utilities, from high rent and utility cost burdens relative to income.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CARNEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material for the RECORD on H.R. 1742, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1742, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013, bipartisan legislation that ensures fairness in the housing assistance made available to our veterans who have borne the physical costs of service to the country.

First, H.R. 1742 amends current law to exempt expenses related to a veteran's in-home aid and attendance-care payments from qualifying as income when determining their eligibility and payments from HUD programs. The in-home aid and attendance-care benefit is an enhanced pension program provided by the VA to severely disabled wartime veterans who make less than

\$12,256 per year. These pensions are provided out of medical necessity and should not be considered disposable income. Including them in income calculations skews eligibility and wrongly reduces the housing assistance that would otherwise be available to thousands of disabled veterans.

The Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act also improves the way utility allowances are calculated by instructing public housing authorities to base payments on family size—that is, the number of people benefiting from a payment—rather than the current standard of dwelling size. Using this approach ensures, for instance, a family of four living in a one-bedroom apartment will not receive less in utility allowance than a single individual living in a two-bedroom apartment. These housing reforms have broad support from State and local housing agencies, low-income housing advocates, and for-profit and nonprofit affordable housing providers.

Mr. Speaker, many of our current veterans assistance programs are flawed—they spend too much and they help too few. Fortunately, the CBO estimates the reforms in this bill will save almost \$50 million over 5 years while helping thousands of veterans obtain the appropriate housing assistance.

Sadly, homelessness affects over 60,000 veterans nationwide and approximately 1,000 in my home State of Arkansas. These numbers are unacceptable. As a combat veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan, I understand not only the difficulties faced while serving in the military, but also the struggles that too many encounter upon returning to civilian life—especially with a life-altering disability. These men and women have put their lives on the line for our country; we should be doing all we can to support them—not making it harder for them to obtain assistance.

I am grateful to my colleague and fellow veteran, Congressman JOE HECK, and the Financial Services Committee for their work on this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and our disabled veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

About a year ago, I talked to a young marine from Magnolia, Delaware, in my district. He had been wounded in Afghanistan and was home recovering. I had called him really just to wish him well and to see how he was doing. This marine was not focused on his injuries. All he could think about and talk to me about was getting back to his base.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we need to be worthy of this marine's sacrifice, his selflessness, and his dedication to fighting for his country. Our Nation's most sacred obligation is to care for our men and women in uniform, both when they are serving abroad and when they come back home.

Unfortunately, today, we are falling short of this duty. Today, about 60,000

veterans are homeless. Close to 13,000 of these are veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While veterans represent only 7 percent of the U.S. population, they represent 13 percent of homeless Americans.

These numbers are just unacceptable. That is why I was pleased to join with my colleagues and friends, Mr. HECK and Mr. RENACCI, in introducing the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013. We are all part of a bipartisan working group that meets a couple of times a month. We have come up with a number of commonsense ideas just like this bill. Mr. DELANEY and Mr. RENACCI have another bill later on today.

Simply put, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act ensures that veterans who need and deserve housing assistance get it. Right now, those veterans who are struggling the most—those who are severely disabled and have virtually no income—receive a benefit from the VA to cover the cost of their care. This benefit goes to caretakers who help our veterans with the daily tasks of living, bathing, eating, maintaining prosthetics, and the list goes on. However, when these same veterans go to apply for housing assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, this aid counts as income, making it harder for them to qualify for housing assistance. This policy just doesn't make sense, and it is hurting our veterans.

H.R. 1742, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act, fixes this problem so that our severely disabled veterans aren't victims of homelessness as well. It excludes this aid—meant to address the health and daily living needs of severely disabled veterans—from the calculation of income in the housing assistance program.

Mr. Speaker, often when Members come in through the doors of the House Chamber to vote, we are greeted by members of our military who have been wounded in service of our Nation. Most have lost limbs, and all their lives are irreparably changed. Despite all they have already given, these men and women come to our Nation's Capitol to continue giving back and to inspire and thank us. We should thank them.

As we approach Veterans Day, I hope the House will honor their sacrifice by passing legislation that will make life just a little easier for those who have given so much to protect ours.

I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle recognize this as a critical issue. A similar version of this bill passed the House by voice vote in the last Congress. I urge my colleagues to pass this bill once again for the sake of our Nation's most vulnerable veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada, Dr. HECK, the sponsor of this legislation, a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve and soon to be brigadier general.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my brother veteran, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), and my friend from the State of Delaware (Mr. CARNEY) for joining me in support of H.R. 1742, this bipartisan bill, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013.

As has been stated, this bill would remove an unnecessary barrier that prevents our wartime veterans from receiving the housing assistance they so critically need. This body recognized the importance of this issue when it unanimously passed a substantially similar bill, H.R. 6361, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2012, which I introduced last year. Unfortunately, that legislation was not considered by the Senate prior to the conclusion of the 112th Congress.

Quite simply, H.R. 1742 prevents the Department of Housing and Urban Development from considering a veteran's "aid and attendance benefits" as income when calculating their need and eligibility for housing assistance.

The aid and attendance benefit is an enhanced pension provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to our Nation's wartime veterans who are severely disabled and have little or no income. Veterans eligible for this benefit are those requiring the aid of another person in order to perform their activities of daily living.

In order to receive this benefit, a veteran must first establish his or her eligibility for a low-income pension, which requires an annual adjusted gross income of less than \$12,256 for a single veteran with no dependents.

Once eligibility is determined, low-income disabled veterans can receive, roughly, an additional \$8,000 in aid and attendance benefits annually to help defray the cost of their medical care. This is an important point: the aid and attendance benefit is for medical care; it is not discretionary income; it cannot be used for groceries, utilities, or transportation.

As you can imagine, these low-income veterans struggle daily to keep the lights on, put food on the table, and to keep a roof over their heads. Add to that the costs of paying for a personal care attendant and it becomes increasingly difficult for them to stay in their homes.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development operates a number of programs to assist these veterans. However, current regulations require that the aid and attendance benefit be counted as income when determining eligibility for housing assistance.

Mr. Speaker, this makes no sense. The VA provides this benefit to ensure that our low-income disabled wartime vets have the necessary resources to receive the medical care they need and that they have earned. While \$8,000 per year may seem like a substantial amount of money, it doesn't fully cover the cost of a full-time aide, but it is much more cost effective than placing the veteran in a nursing home or assisted living facility.

Continuing to count the aid and attendance benefit as income does nothing more than to reduce the housing assistance available to our low-income disabled vets and jeopardizes their ability to live independently.

Mr. Speaker, it is its stated goal of both this House and this administration to reduce homelessness in our veteran population. The need for this legislative fix is just as strong today as it was last year. Most recent statistics estimate that approximately 63,000 veterans across America are homeless. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1742 will go a long way toward preventing homelessness for our Nation's veterans.

I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I just would like to thank the sponsors, Mr. HECK, Mr. RENACCI, and other veterans, Mr. COTTON, the Members from the Democratic side who cosponsored this, and all the Members of the House who supported this the last time.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Delaware, as well as the gentleman from Nevada, and everybody in this institution that helps serve our veterans every single day.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1742.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1630

ESTABLISHING COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE THE BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2189) to establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2189

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Table of contents.

Sec. 2. Scoring of budgetary effects.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF CLAIMS PROCESSING

Sec. 101. Evaluation of backlog of disability claims and appeals of claims of Department of Veterans Affairs.

- Sec. 102. Supplemental reports to the Strategic Plan to Eliminate the Compensation Claims Backlog.
- Sec. 103. Expedition of transfer of certain records.
- Sec. 104. Claims processors training.
- Sec. 105. Report by Comptroller General of the United States.
- Sec. 106. Priority for processing claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 107. Public availability of certain information about pending and completed claims for compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 108. Annual report on processing of claims.
- Sec. 109. Department of Veterans Affairs notice of average times for processing claims and percentage of claims approved.
- Sec. 110. Claim defined.

TITLE II—COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

- Sec. 201. Improvements to authority for performance of medical disabilities examinations by contract physicians.
- Sec. 202. Consideration by Secretary of Veterans Affairs of resources disposed of for less than fair market value by individuals applying for pension.
- Sec. 203. Bifurcated payments of compensation benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 204. Pension for certain veterans covered by Medicaid plans for services furnished by nursing facilities.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

- Sec. 301. Review of operation of certain ships during the Vietnam Era.
- Sec. 302. Methods for validating certain service considered to be active service by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 303. Designation of American World War II Cities.
- Sec. 304. Observance of Veterans Day.

SEC. 2. SCORING OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF CLAIMS PROCESSING

SEC. 101. EVALUATION OF BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS AND APPEALS OF CLAIMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of claims within the Department of Veterans Affairs and the appeals process of claims.

(b) STUDIES.—

(1) BACKLOG STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission or Task Force, acting through the subcommittee described in subsection (d)(2)(A), shall carry out a study on the backlog of claims, including the current process the Secretary of Veterans Affairs uses to evaluate claims and appeals and the laws and regulations applicable to such claims and appeals. Such study shall be a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of the backlog of claims, an analysis of

possible improvements to the procedures used to process such claims, and any related issues that the Commission or Task Force considers relevant.

(B) **MATTERS INCLUDED.**—In carrying out the study under subparagraph (A), the Commission or Task Force shall examine the following:

(i) The backlog of claims, including an analysis of—

(I) the most effective means to quickly and accurately resolve all claims pending as of the date of the study; and

(II) with respect to the Department, the annual funding, number of full-time employees, workload management practices, and the progress, as of the date of the study, of the strategic plan.

(ii) Possible improvements to the claims process, including an evaluation and recommendations with respect to whether substantive and structural changes to the overall claims process are required.

(iii) In carrying out the evaluation and recommendations under subparagraph (B), an examination of—

(I) options that make no major substantive changes to the claims process;

(II) options that maintain the process but make minor changes; and

(III) options that make broad changes to the process.

(2) **APPEALS PROCESS STUDY.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Commission or Task Force, acting through the subcommittee described in subsection (d)(2)(B), shall carry out a study on the anticipated increase of appeals of claims, including the current appeals process and the laws and regulations applicable to such appeals. Such study shall be a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of such anticipated increase of appeals claims, an analysis of possible improvements to the procedures used to process such appeals, and any related issues that the Commission or Task Force considers relevant.

(B) **MATTERS INCLUDED.**—In carrying out the study under subparagraph (A), the Commission or Task Force shall examine the following:

(i) The anticipated surge in appeals of claims, including an analysis of—

(I) the most effective means to quickly and accurately resolve pending appeals and future appeals;

(II) with respect to both the Board and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, the annual funding, number of full-time employees, workload management practices, and the progress, as of the date of the study, of the strategic plan; and

(III) the efficiency, effectiveness, and utility of the Veterans Benefits Management System with respect to appeals operations, including an identification of key changes that may need to be implemented to such system.

(ii) Possible improvements to the appeals process, including an evaluation and recommendations with respect to whether substantive and structural changes to the overall appeals process are required.

(iii) In carrying out the evaluation and recommendations under clause (ii), an examination of—

(I) options that make no major substantive changes to the appeals process;

(II) options that maintain the process but make minor changes;

(III) options that make broad changes to the process;

(IV) the necessity of the multi-tiered levels of appeals at the regional office level, including filing a notice of disagreement, receipt of a statement of the case, supplemental statement of the case (if applicable), and substantive appeal (VA Form 9);

(V) the role of the Board and the Appeals Management Center, including—

(aa) the effectiveness of the workload management of the Board and the Center;

(bb) whether the Board and Center should be regionalized or maintain the centralized structure in the District of Columbia;

(cc) whether Board members should be required to pass the administrative law judges certification examination; and

(dd) whether the Board should continue to require de novo review of appeals; and

(VI) the role of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, including—

(aa) the continued effectiveness and necessity of a multi-tiered structure of judicial review;

(bb) whether the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims should have Article I or Article III status;

(cc) expansion of either the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit jurisdiction, including by allowing such courts to hear class action lawsuits with respect to claims; and

(dd) the possibility of expanding judicial review of claims to all Federal circuit courts of appeals or allowing judicial review beyond the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims only by the Supreme Court.

(3) **CONSIDERATION.**—In carrying out the studies under paragraph (1)(A) and (2)(A) and making any recommendations under this section, the Commission or Task Force shall consider the following:

(A) The interests of veterans, including with respect to accuracy, fairness, and transparency in the claims process of the Department.

(B) The values and requirements of the Constitution, including with respect to compliance with procedural and substantive due process.

(C) The public interest, including with respect to the responsible use of available resources.

(D) With respect to the study conducted under paragraph (1)(A), the importance of the claimant friendly, nonadversarial nature of the claims process.

(E) With respect to the study conducted under paragraph (2)(A), the importance of an appeals process that is efficient and easily understandable by a claimant.

(4) **ROLE OF SECRETARY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, AND CHIEF JUDGE.**—

(A) **INFORMATION.**—In carrying out each study under paragraph (1)(A) and (2)(A), at times that the Commission or Task Force determines appropriate, the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, as the case may be, information with respect to remedies and solutions that the Commission or Task Force identifies pursuant to such a study.

(B) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—The Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge shall each—

(i) fully consider the remedies and solutions submitted to the Secretary, the Chairman, or the Chief Judge, as the case may be, under subparagraph (A);

(ii) implement such remedies and solutions as the Secretary, the Chairman, or the Chief Judge, respectively, determines appropriate; and

(iii) submit to Congress justification for failing to implement any such remedy or solution.

(C) **PLAN.**—The Commission or Task Force shall submit to the Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge a feasible, timely, and cost-effective plan to eliminate

the backlog of appeals of claims based on the remedies and solutions identified pursuant to the study under paragraph (2)(A) and the information submitted under subparagraph (A).

(c) **COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS.**—

(1) **INITIAL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.**—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force first meets, the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the President and Congress an initial comprehensive report on the studies conducted under paragraphs (1)(A) and (2)(A) of subsection (b), including—

(A) the findings of the causes of the backlog of claims;

(B) a proposed plan to handle the anticipated surge in appeals of claims; and

(C) the level of cooperation the Commission or Task Force has received from the Secretary and the heads of other departments or agencies of the Federal Government.

(2) **INTERIM COMPREHENSIVE REPORTS.**—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force first meets, and each 30-day period thereafter ending on the date on which the Commission or Task Force submits the final comprehensive report under paragraph (3), the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the President and Congress a comprehensive report on—

(A) the progress of the Secretary with respect to implementing solutions to expedite the elimination of the backlog of claims pursuant to subsection (b)(4)(B)(ii);

(B) the progress of the Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims with respect to implementing solutions to complete appeals of claims in a timely manner in a timely manner pursuant to such subsection; and

(C) the level of cooperation the Commission or Task Force has received from the Secretary and the heads of other departments or agencies of the Federal Government.

(3) **FINAL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force first meets, the Commission or Task Force shall submit to the President and Congress a comprehensive report on the following:

(A) With respect to the study conducted under subsection (b)(1)(A)—

(i) The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Commission or Task Force with respect to the matters referred to in such subsection.

(ii) The recommendations of the Commission or Task Force for revising and improving the backlog of claims and the procedures used to process claims.

(iii) The progress of the Secretary with respect to implementing solutions to expedite the elimination of the backlog of claims pursuant to subsection (b)(4)(B)(ii).

(iv) Other information and recommendations with respect to claims as the Commission or Task Force considers appropriate.

(B) With respect to the study conducted under subsection (b)(2)(A)—

(i) The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Commission or Task Force with respect to the matters referred to in such subsection.

(ii) The recommendations of the Commission or Task Force for revising and improving the appeals process;

(iii) The information described in subsection (b)(4)(A).

(iv) The feasible, timely, and cost effective plan described in subsection (b)(4)(C).

(v) The progress of the Secretary, the Chairman of the Board, and the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

with respect to implementing solutions to provide timely appeals of claims.

(vi) Other information and recommendations with respect to the appeals process as the Commission or Task Force considers appropriate.

(d) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission or Task Force shall be composed of 15 members, appointed as follows:

(A) Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(B) Two members appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(C) Two members appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(D) Two members appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(E) Three members appointed by the President, two of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(F) One member appointed by the Secretary of Defense, whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims.

(G) Two members appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and one of whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(H) One member appointed by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, whom shall be designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on Appeals.

(2) SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Commission or Task Force shall have two subcommittees as follows:

(A) A Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims consisting of the eight members designated in accordance with paragraph (1).

(B) A Subcommittee on Appeals consisting of the seven members designated in accordance with paragraph (1).

(3) QUALIFICATIONS.—Each member appointed under paragraph (1) shall be appointed based on the experience of the member as a veteran or on the subject matter expertise or other relevant experience of the member.

(4) ADVISORS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to the 15 members appointed under paragraph (1), the Commission or Task Force shall—

(i) have five nonvoting, nonmember advisors, appointed by a majority of the Commission or Task Force, each from a different organization that represents the interests of veterans; and

(ii) seek advice from experts from non-governmental organizations (including veterans service organizations and military organizations), the Internet technology industry, and the insurance industry.

(B) ADVICE.—Individuals described in clause (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A) shall provide advice to both subcommittees described in paragraph (2).

(5) CHAIRMAN.—The President shall designate a member of the Commission or Task Force who is appointed by the President and designated to serve upon the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims to serve as the chairman of the Commission or Task Force. The chairman may designate a member to serve as the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Backlog of Claims and a member to serve as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Appeals to chair such subcommittees as the designee of the chairman of the Commission or Task Force.

(6) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—Members of the Commission or Task Force shall be appointed for the life of the Commission or Task Force. A vacancy shall not affect its powers.

(7) VACANCY.—A vacancy on the Commission or Task Force shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(8) APPOINTMENT DEADLINE.—The appointment of members of the Commission or Task Force established in this section shall be made not later than 15 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(e) MEETINGS.—

(1) INITIAL MEETING.—The Commission or Task Force shall hold its first meeting not later than 15 days after the date on which a majority of the members are appointed.

(2) MEETINGS.—The Commission or Task Force shall meet at the call of the chairman.

(3) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission or Task Force shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(f) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE.—

(1) HEARINGS.—The Commission or Task Force may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission or Task Force considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this section.

(2) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Commission or Task Force may secure directly from any department or agency of the Federal Government such information as the Commission or Task Force considers necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. Upon request of the chairman, the head of such department or agency shall furnish such information to the Commission or Task Force.

(3) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission or Task Force may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

(4) GIFTS.—The Commission or Task Force may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of service or property.

(g) PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

(1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each member of the Commission or Task Force who is not an officer or employee of the United States shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which the member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Commission or Task Force. All members of the Commission or Task Force who are officers or employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Commission or Task Force shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of busi-

ness in the performance of service of the Commission or Task Force.

(3) STAFF.—

(A) APPOINTMENT.—The chairman of the Commission or Task Force may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint an executive director and such other personnel as may be necessary to enable the Commission or Task Force to perform its duties. The appointment of an executive director shall be subject to the approval of the Commission or Task Force.

(B) COMPENSATION.—The chairman of the Commission or Task Force may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(4) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon request of the chairman of the Commission or Task Force, the head of any department or agency of the Federal Government may detail, on a nonreimbursable basis, any personnel of that department or agency to the Commission or Task Force to assist it in carrying out its duties.

(5) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The chairman of the Commission or Task Force may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(h) TERMINATION OF COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE.—The Commission or Task Force shall terminate 60 days after the date on which the Commission or Task Force submits the final comprehensive report under subsection (c)(3).

(i) FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, upon the request of the chairman of the Commission or Task Force, make available to the Commission or Task Force such amounts as the Commission or Task Force may require to carry out the duties of the Commission or Task Force under this section.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—Any sums made available to the Commission or Task Force shall remain available, without fiscal year limitation, until the termination of the Commission or Task Force.

(j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “appeals process” means the process to appeal the determination by the Secretary of a claim beginning with the notice of disagreement filed pursuant to section 7105 of title 38, United States Code, and ending with the review of a decision by the Supreme Court pursuant to section 7292(c) of such title.

(2) The term “Board” means the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

(3) The term “strategic plan” means the Strategic Plan to Eliminate the Compensation Claims Backlog, published by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on January 25, 2013.

SEC. 102. SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN TO ELIMINATE THE COMPENSATION CLAIMS BACKLOG.

Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 120 days thereafter until Memorial Day (May 25), 2015, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a supplemental report on the implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs of the Strategic Plan to Eliminate the Compensation Claims Backlog. Each such report shall include—

(1) verification that during the period covered by the report, each claim was approved or denied by not later than 125 days after the date on which the claim is submitted with an accuracy rate of 98 percent, as specified in the Strategic Plan;

(2) a description of the specific measures, procedures, and metrics used to assess the implementation of the Strategic Plan for purposes of the supplemental report; and

(3) a detailed timeline for the implementation of each initiative contained in the Strategic Plan.

SEC. 103. EXPEDITION OF TRANSFER OF CERTAIN RECORDS.

(a) **SSA RECORDS.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration to ensure that the Commissioner transfers to the Secretary disability or medical records of the Commissioner that the Secretary will use to evaluate a claim by not later than 30 days after the Secretary requests such records.

(b) **DOD RECORDS.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Secretary of Defense transfers to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs medical records of members or former members of the Armed Forces that the Secretary will use to evaluate a claim by not later than 30 days after the Secretary requests such records.

(c) **NATIONAL GUARD RECORDS.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly—

(1) submit to Congress a plan to reduce to 30 days the amount of time needed to provide members of the National Guard and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with the medical records of such members, including by partnering with appropriate officials of Federal or State departments or agencies; and

(2) implement such plan.

(d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. CLAIMS PROCESSORS TRAINING.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a training program to provide newly hired claims processors of the Department of Veterans Affairs with training for a period of not less than two years. In carrying out such program, the Secretary shall identify successful claims processors of the Department who can assist in the training of newly hired claims processors.

(b) **ABILITY TO PROCESS CLAIMS.**—The Secretary shall carry out the training program established under subsection (a) without increasing the amount of time in which claims are processed by the Department.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 105. REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the progress of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in improving the timeliness of claims processing and eliminating the backlog of claims. The report shall include any recommendations of the Comptroller General with respect to improving the ability of the Secretary to make such progress.

SEC. 106. PRIORITY FOR PROCESSING CLAIMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter I of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended

by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 5109C. Priority for processing claims

“(a) **PRIORITY.**—In processing claims for compensation under this chapter, the Secretary shall provide the following claimants with priority over other claimants:

“(1) Veterans who have attained the age of 70.

“(2) Veterans who are terminally ill.

“(3) Veterans with life-threatening illnesses.

“(4) Homeless veterans (as defined in section 2002 of this title).

“(5) Veterans who were awarded the Medal of Honor.

“(6) Veterans who are former prisoners of war.

“(7) Veterans whose claims are being reviewed again in relation to a previously denied claim relating to military sexual trauma.

“(8) Veterans whom the Secretary determines, on a case-by-case basis, are seriously or very seriously injured.

“(9) Veterans whom the Secretary determines, on a case-by-case basis, should be given priority under this section based on an application for good cause established by the Secretary.

“(b) **REGULATIONS.**—The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out subsection (a).”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5109B the following new item:

“5109C. Priority for processing claims.”.

SEC. 107. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT PENDING AND COMPLETED CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION UNDER THE LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter I of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 5109C, as added by section 106, the following new section:

“§ 5109D. Information about pending and completed claims

“(a) **AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.**—The Secretary shall maintain on the Internet website of the Department publicly accessible information about pending and completed claims for compensation under chapter 11 of this title. Such information shall include each of the following:

“(1) For each regional office and for the Department as a whole—

“(A) the average number of days between the date of the submittal of a claim and the date of the decision with respect to the claim for each of the preceding three-month and one-year period;

“(B) the average number of days such a claim is pending during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

“(C) the quality and accuracy rating of the claims adjudication process during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

“(D) the number of claims pending;

“(E) the number of pending claims that have been pending for more than 125 days; and

“(F) the number of claims completed during—

“(i) the current month, to date;

“(ii) the month preceding the current month;

“(iii) the current calendar year, to date; and

“(iv) the calendar year preceding the current calendar year.

“(2) For each medical condition for which a claim for compensation is submitted, for each regional office and for the Department as a whole—

“(A) the average number of days between the date of the submittal of a claim relating to such medical condition and the date of the decision with respect to the claim for each of the preceding three-month and one-year period;

“(B) the average number of days such a claim is pending during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

“(C) the quality and accuracy rating of the claims adjudication process as applied to claims relating to such medical condition during the preceding three-month and one-year periods;

“(D) the number of pending claims relating to such condition;

“(E) the number of such pending claims that have been pending for more than 125 days; and

“(F) the number of claims relating to such medical condition completed during—

“(i) the current month, to date;

“(ii) the month preceding current month;

“(iii) the current calendar year, to date; and

“(iv) the calendar year preceding the current calendar year.

“(b) **UPDATES.**—The Secretary shall update the information on the website under subsection (a) not less frequently than once every seven days.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 5109C, as added by section 106, the following new item:

“5109D. Information about pending and completed claims.”.

SEC. 108. ANNUAL REPORT ON PROCESSING OF CLAIMS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter I of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding after section 5109D, as added by section 107, the following new section:

“§ 5109E. Annual report on processing of claims

“(a) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—The Secretary shall include in the annual report to Congress required under section 529 of this title information on the following:

“(1) The automatic processing of claims for compensation.

“(2) The performance of any regional office that fails to meet the administrative goals of the regional office with respect to timeliness and accuracy in processing claims for compensation.

“(3) The timeliness of receiving information pursuant to a request by the Secretary to the head of another department or agency of the United States for information required by the Secretary in adjudicating a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of this title.

“(b) **MATTERS INCLUDED.**—In carrying out subsection (a) to include information in the report required under section 529 of this title, the Secretary shall include the following:

“(1) With respect to the information required by subsection (a)(1)—

“(A) each medical condition for which claims relating to such condition were processed in an electronic automated fashion during the fiscal year covered by the report;

“(B) the feasibility of processing any additional medical conditions in an electronic automated fashion and any barriers to such processing, including any such barriers relating to the schedule for rating disabilities under section 1155 of this title;

“(C) the number of claims for compensation relating to each medical condition submitted during such fiscal year; and

“(D) for each medical condition, the percentage of claims denied and the percentage of claims approved during such fiscal year.

“(2) With respect to the information required by subsection (a)(2), in the case of any

regional office that, for the fiscal year covered by the report, did not meet the administrative goal of having no claim pending for more than 125 days and achieving an accuracy rating of 98 percent—

“(A) a signed statement prepared by the individual serving as director of the regional office as of the date of the submittal of the report containing—

“(i) an explanation for why the regional office did not meet the goal;

“(ii) a description of the additional resources needed to enable the regional office to reach the goal; and

“(iii) a description of any additional actions planned for the subsequent fiscal year that are proposed to enable the regional office to meet the goal; and

“(B) a statement prepared by the Under Secretary for Benefits explaining how the failure of the regional office to meet the goal affected the performance evaluation of the director of the regional office.

“(3) With respect to the information required by subsection (a)(3)—

“(A) the number of requests described in such paragraph made during the fiscal year covered by the report; and

“(B) the average response time for such requests made during each month of such fiscal year, as determined based on the period beginning on the date on which the Secretary made the request and ending on the date on which the Secretary determines that the request is completed.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 5109D, as added by section 107, the following new item:

“5109E. Annual report on processing of claims.”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—Section 5109E of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 109. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NOTICE OF AVERAGE TIMES FOR PROCESSING CLAIMS AND PERCENTAGE OF CLAIMS APPROVED.

(a) **PUBLIC NOTICE.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall post the information described in subsection (c)—

(1) in a conspicuous place in each regional office and claims intake facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(2) on the Internet website of the Department.

(b) **NOTICE TO APPLICANTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall provide to each person who submits a claim for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary before the person submits such claim—

(A) notice of the information described in subsection (c); and

(B) notice that, during the period ending on August 6, 2015, the person is eligible to receive up to an extra year of benefits payments if the person files an original claim that is fully developed.

(2) **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF NOTICE.**—Each person who submits a claim for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary shall include in such application a signed form acknowledging that the person received the information described in subsection (c).

(c) **INFORMATION DESCRIBED.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The information described in this subsection is the following:

(A) The average processing time of the claims described in paragraph (2) and the percentage of such submitted claims for which benefits are awarded.

(B) The percentage of each of the following types of submitted claims for benefits under

the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for which benefits are awarded:

(i) Claims filed by veterans who authorized a veterans service organization to act on the veterans' behalf under a durable power of attorney.

(ii) Claims filed by veterans who authorized a person other than a veterans service organization to act on the veterans' behalf under a durable power of attorney.

(iii) Claims filed by veterans who did not authorize a person to act on the veterans' behalf under a durable power of attorney.

(2) **CLAIMS DESCRIBED.**—The claims described in this paragraph are each of the following types of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs:

(A) A fully developed claim that is submitted in standard electronic form.

(B) A fully developed claim that is submitted in standard paper form.

(C) A claim that is not fully developed that is submitted in standard electronic form.

(D) A claim that is not fully developed that is submitted in standard paper form.

(E) A claim that is not fully developed that is submitted in nonstandard paper form.

(3) **UPDATE OF INFORMATION.**—The information described in this subsection shall be updated not less frequently than once each fiscal quarter.

(d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 110. CLAIM DEFINED.

Except as otherwise provided, in this title, the term “claim” means a claim for disability compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

SEC. 201. IMPROVEMENTS TO AUTHORITY FOR PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL DISABILITIES EXAMINATIONS BY CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.

(a) **EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY AUTHORITY.**—Subsection (c) of section 704 of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2016”.

(b) **LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.**—

(1) **TEMPORARY AUTHORITY.**—Such section 704 is further amended—

(A) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

(B) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection (d):

“(d) **LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any law regarding the licensure of physicians, a physician described in paragraph (2) may conduct an examination pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (b) at any location in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, so long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties under such contract.

“(2) **PHYSICIAN DESCRIBED.**—A physician described in this paragraph is a physician who—

“(A) has a current license to practice the health care profession of the physician; and

“(B) is performing authorized duties for the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (b).”.

(2) **PILOT PROGRAM.**—Section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 (38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

“(c) **LICENSURE OF CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any law regarding the licensure of physicians, a phy-

sician described in paragraph (2) may conduct an examination pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a) at any location in any State, the District of Columbia, or a Commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, so long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties under such contract.

“(2) **PHYSICIAN DESCRIBED.**—A physician described in this paragraph is a physician who—

“(A) has a current license to practice the health care profession of the physician; and

“(B) is performing authorized duties for the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to a contract entered into under subsection (a).”.

(c) **EXPANSION OF PILOT PROGRAM.**—Subsection (b) of such section 504 is amended to read as follows:

“(b) **LOCATIONS.**—

“(1) **NUMBER.**—The Secretary may carry out the pilot program under this section through not more than 15 regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“(2) **SELECTION.**—The Secretary shall select the regional offices under paragraph (1) by analyzing appropriate data to determine the regional offices that require support. Such appropriate data shall include—

“(A) the number of backlogged claims;

“(B) the total pending case workload;

“(C) the length of time cases have been pending;

“(D) the accuracy of completed cases;

“(E) the overall timeliness of completed cases;

“(F) the availability and workload of the examination units and physicians of the medical centers in the regional office; and

“(G) any other data the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(3) **ANNUAL ANALYSIS.**—The Secretary shall carry out the data analysis of the regional offices under paragraph (2) during each year in which the program under this section is carried out to determine the regional offices selected under paragraph (1) for such year.”.

(d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section and the amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 202. CONSIDERATION BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF RESOURCES DISPOSED OF FOR LESS THAN FAIR MARKET VALUE BY INDIVIDUALS APPLYING FOR PENSION.

(a) **VETERANS.**—Section 1522 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2)(A) If a veteran otherwise eligible for payment of pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or the spouse of such veteran disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue the payment of pension to such veteran under section 1513 or 1521 of this title, as the case may be, for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

“(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the veteran or, if the veteran has a spouse, the corpus of the estates of the veteran and of the veteran's spouse, that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the veteran or spouse had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that

the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the veteran's maintenance.

“(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the veteran or, if the veteran has a spouse, the corpus of the estates of the veteran and of the veteran's spouse, that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the veteran's maintenance.

“(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

“(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the veteran applies for pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or, if later, the date on which the veteran (or the spouse of the veteran) disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

“(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

“(E) The number of months calculated under this subparagraph shall be equal to—

“(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the veteran (or the spouse of the veteran) on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the veteran's maintenance; divided by

“(ii) the maximum amount of monthly pension that is payable to a veteran under section 1513 or 1521 of this title, including the maximum amount of increased pension payable under such sections on account of family members, but not including any amount of pension payable under such sections because a veteran is in need of regular aid and attendance or is permanently housebound,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2)(A) If a veteran otherwise eligible for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child, the spouse of the veteran, or the child disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue payment of such increased pension for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

“(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the veteran, the spouse of the veteran, or the child had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the child's maintenance.

“(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with

regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the child's maintenance.

“(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

“(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the veteran applies for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child or, if later, the date on which the veteran, the spouse of the veteran, or the child disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

“(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

“(E) The number of months calculated under this subparagraph shall be equal to—

“(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the veteran, the spouse of the veteran, or the child on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the child's maintenance; divided by

“(ii) the maximum amount of increased monthly pension that is payable to a veteran under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child, rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

“(c)(1) The Secretary shall not deny or discontinue payment of pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child by reason of the application of subsection (a)(2) or (b)(2) of this section to the disposal of resources by an individual to the extent that—

“(A) a satisfactory showing is made to the Secretary (in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary) that all resources disposed of for less than fair market value have been returned to the individual who disposed of the resources; or

“(B) the Secretary determines, under procedures established by the Secretary, that the denial or discontinuance of payment would work an undue hardship as determined on the basis of criteria established by the Secretary.

“(2) At the time a veteran applies for pension under section 1513 or 1521 of this title or increased pension under subsection (c), (d), (e), or (f) of section 1521 of this title on account of a child, and at such other times as the Secretary considers appropriate, the Secretary shall—

“(A) inform such veteran of the provisions of subsections (a)(2) and (b)(2) providing for a period of ineligibility for payment of pension under such sections for individuals who make certain dispositions of resources for less than fair market value; and

“(B) obtain from such veteran information which may be used in determining whether or not a period of ineligibility for such payments would be required by reason of such subsections.

“(d) Subsections (a)(2) and (b)(2) shall not apply with respect to the disposal of resources or the transfer of an asset if such

disposal or transfer is to a trust described in section 1917(d)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396p(d)(4)) that is established for the benefit of a child of the veteran.”.

(b) SURVIVING SPOUSES AND CHILDREN.—Section 1543 of such title is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3);

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph (2):

“(2)(A) If a surviving spouse otherwise eligible for payment of pension under section 1541 of this title disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue the payment of pension to such surviving spouse under section 1541 of this title for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

“(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the surviving spouse that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the surviving spouse had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the surviving spouse's maintenance.

“(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the surviving spouse that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the surviving spouse's maintenance.

“(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

“(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the surviving spouse applies for pension under section 1541 of this title or, if later, the date on which the surviving spouse disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

“(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

“(E) The number of months calculated under this subparagraph shall be equal to—

“(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the surviving spouse on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the surviving spouse's maintenance; divided by

“(ii) the maximum amount of monthly pension that is payable to a surviving spouse under section 1541 of this title, including the maximum amount of increased pension payable under such section on account of a child, but not including any amount of pension payable under such section because a surviving spouse is in need of regular aid and attendance or is permanently housebound,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.

“(F) In the case of a transfer by the surviving spouse during the veteran's lifetime that resulted in a period of ineligibility for the veteran under section 1522 of this title,

the Secretary shall apply to the surviving spouse any remaining ineligibility for that period.”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4)(A) If a surviving spouse otherwise eligible for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child or the child disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue payment of such increased pension for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

“(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the surviving spouse or the child had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the child’s maintenance.

“(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate of the child that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the child’s maintenance.

“(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

“(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the surviving spouse applies for payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child or, if later, the date on which the surviving spouse (or the child) disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

“(D) The date described in this subparagraph is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

“(E) The number of months calculated under this clause shall be equal to—

“(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by surviving spouse (or the child) on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the child’s maintenance; divided by

“(ii) the maximum amount of increased monthly pension that is payable to a surviving spouse under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2)(A) If a child otherwise eligible for payment of pension under section 1542 of this title or any person with whom such child is residing who is legally responsible for such child’s support disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall deny or discontinue the payment of pension to such

child under section 1542 of this title for months during the period beginning on the date described in subparagraph (D) and equal to the number of months calculated as provided in subparagraph (E).

“(B)(i) For purposes of this paragraph, a covered resource is any resource that was a part of the corpus of the estate of the child or the corpus of the estate of any person with whom such child is residing who is legally responsible for such child’s support that the Secretary considers that under all the circumstances, if the child or person had not disposed of such resource, it would be reasonable that the resource (or some portion of the resource) be consumed for the child’s maintenance.

“(ii) For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary may consider, in accordance with regulations the Secretary shall prescribe, a transfer of an asset (including a transfer of an asset to an annuity, trust, or other financial instrument or investment) a disposal of a covered resource for less than fair market value if such transfer reduces the amount in the corpus of the estate described in clause (i) that the Secretary considers, under all the circumstances, would be reasonable to be consumed for the child’s maintenance.

“(C)(i) The look-back date described in this clause is a date that is 36 months before the date described in clause (ii).

“(ii) The date described in this clause is the date on which the child applies for pension under section 1542 of this title or, if later, the date on which the child (or person described in subparagraph (B)) disposes of covered resources for less than fair market value.

“(D) The date described in this clause is the first day of the first month in or after which covered resources were disposed of for less than fair market value and which does not occur in any other period of ineligibility under this paragraph.

“(E) The number of months calculated under this clause shall be equal to—

“(i) the total, cumulative uncompensated value of the portion of covered resources so disposed of by the child (or person described in subparagraph (B)) on or after the look-back date described in subparagraph (C)(i) that the Secretary determines would reasonably have been consumed for the child’s maintenance; divided by

“(ii) the maximum amount of monthly pension that is payable to a child under section 1542 of this title,

rounded, in the case of any fraction, to the nearest whole number, but shall not in any case exceed 36 months.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

“(c)(1) The Secretary shall not deny or discontinue payment of pension under section 1541 or 1542 of this title or payment of increased pension under subsection (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child by reason of the application of subsection (a)(2), (a)(4), or (b)(2) of this section to the disposal of resources by an individual to the extent that—

“(A) a satisfactory showing is made to the Secretary (in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary) that all resources disposed of for less than fair market value have been returned to the individual who disposed of the resources; or

“(B) the Secretary determines, under procedures established by the Secretary, that the denial or discontinuance of payment would work an undue hardship as determined on the basis of criteria established by the Secretary.

“(2) At the time a surviving spouse or child applies for pension under section 1541 or 1542 of this title or increased pension under sub-

section (c), (d), or (e) of section 1541 of this title on account of a child, and at such other times as the Secretary considers appropriate, the Secretary shall—

“(A) inform such surviving spouse or child of the provisions of subsections (a)(2), (a)(4), and (b)(2), as applicable, providing for a period of ineligibility for payment of pension or increased pension under such sections for individuals who make certain dispositions of resources for less than fair market value; and

“(B) obtain from such surviving spouse or child information which may be used in determining whether or not a period of ineligibility for such payments would be required by reason of such subsections.

“(d) Paragraphs (2) and (4) of subsection (a) and subsection (b)(2) shall not apply with respect to the disposal of resources or the transfer of an asset if such disposal or transfer is to a trust described in section 1917(d)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396p(d)(4)) that is established for the benefit of a child of the veteran or surviving spouse.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsections (a)(2), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1522 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and subsections (a)(2), (a)(4), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1543 of such title, as added by subsection (b), shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to payments of pension and increased pension applied for after such date and to payments of pension and increased pension for which eligibility is redetermined after such date, except that no reduction in pension shall be made under such subsections because of any disposal of covered resources made before such date.

(d) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year thereafter through 2018, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the administration of subsections (a)(2), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1522 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and subsections (a)(2), (a)(4), (b)(2), and (c) of section 1543 of such title, as added by subsection (b), during the most recent 12-month period.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following, for the period covered by the report:

(A) The number of individuals who applied for pension under chapter 15 of such title.

(B) The number of individuals who received pension under such chapter.

(C) The number of individuals with respect to whom the Secretary denied or discontinued payment of pension under the subsections referred to in paragraph (1).

(D) A description of any trends identified by the Secretary regarding pension payments that have occurred as a result of the amendments made by this section.

(E) Such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(3) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Select Committee on Aging of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 203. BIFURCATED PAYMENTS OF COMPENSATION BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 51 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 5127. Bifurcated payments of compensation benefits

“(a) IN GENERAL.—During the eight-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this section, in the case of a claim described in subsection (b), prior to adjudicating the claim, the Secretary shall make payments of monetary benefits to the claimant based on any disability for which the Secretary has made a decision. Upon the adjudication of the claim, the Secretary shall pay to the claimant any monetary benefits awarded to the claimant for the period of payment under section 5111 of this title less the amount of such benefits paid to the claimant under this section.

“(b) CLAIM DESCRIBED.—A claim described in this subsection is a claim for disability compensation under chapter 11 of this title—

“(1) the adjudication of which requires the Secretary to make decisions with respect to two or more disabilities; and

“(2) for which, before completing the adjudication of the claim, the Secretary makes a decision with respect to a disability that would result in the payment of monetary benefits to the claimant upon the adjudication of the claim.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to such subchapter the following new item:

“5127. Bifurcated payments of compensation benefits.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 5127 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 204. PENSION FOR CERTAIN VETERANS COVERED BY MEDICAID PLANS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED BY NURSING FACILITIES.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “November 30, 2016” and inserting “September 30, 2018”.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 301. REVIEW OF OPERATION OF CERTAIN SHIPS DURING THE VIETNAM ERA.

(a) REVIEW REQUIRED.—By not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall review the logs of each ship under the authority of the Secretary of the Navy that is known to have operated in the waters near Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, to determine—

(1) whether each ship operated in the territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam during such period; and

(2) for each such ship that so operated—

(A) the date or dates when the ship so operated; and

(B) the distance from the shore of the location where the ship operated that was the closest proximity to shore.

(b) PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Upon a determination that any such ship so operated, the Secretary of Defense shall provide such determination, together with the information described in subsection (a)(2) about the ship, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make publicly available all unclassified information provided to the Secretary under subsection (b).

SEC. 302. METHODS FOR VALIDATING CERTAIN SERVICE CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Merchant Marine Act, 1936 established the United States Maritime Commis-

sion, and stated as a matter of policy that the United States should have a merchant marine that is “capable of serving as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency”.

(2) The Social Security Act Amendments of 1939 (Public Law 76-379) expanded the definition of employment to include service “on or in connection with an American vessel under contract of service which is entered into within the United States or during the performance of which the vessel touches at a port in the United States, if the employee is employed on and in connection with such vessel”.

(3) The Joint Resolution to repeal sections 2, 3, and 6 of the Neutrality Act of 1939, and for other purposes (Public Law 77-294; 55 Stat. 764) repealed section 6 of the Neutrality Act of 1939 (related to the arming of United States vessels) and authorized the President during the national emergency to arm or permit to arm any United States vessel.

(4) On February 7, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, through Executive Order Number 9054, established the War Shipping Administration that was charged with building or purchasing, and operating the civilian shipping vessels needed for the war effort.

(5) During World War II, United States merchant mariners transported goods and materials through “contested waters” to the various combat theaters.

(6) At the conclusion of World War II, United States merchant mariners were responsible for transporting several million members of the United States Armed Forces back to the United States.

(7) The GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-202) provided that the Secretary of Defense could determine that service for the Armed Forces by organized groups of civilians, or contractors, be considered “active service” for benefits administered by the Veterans Administration.

(8) Department of Defense Directive 1000.20 directed that the determination be made by the Secretary of the Air Force, and established the Civilian/Military Service Review Board and Advisory Panel.

(9) In 1987, three merchant mariners along with the AFL-CIO sued Edward C. Aldridge, Secretary of the Air Force, challenging the denial of their application for veterans status. In *Schumacher v. Aldridge* (665 F. Supp. 41 (D.D.C. 1987)), the Court determined that Secretary Aldridge had failed to “articulate clear and intelligible criteria for the administration” of the application approval process.

(10) During World War II, women were repeatedly denied issuance of official documentation affirming their merchant marine seaman status by the War Shipping Administration.

(11) Coast Guard Information Sheet #77 (April 1992) identifies the following acceptable forms of documentation for eligibility meeting the requirements set forth in the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-202) and Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-368):

(A) Certificate of shipping and discharge forms.

(B) Continuous discharge books (ship’s deck or engine logbooks).

(C) Company letters showing vessel names and dates of voyages.

(12) Coast Guard Commandant Order of March 20, 1944, relieved masters of tugs, towboats, and seagoing barges of the responsibility of submitting reports of seamen shipped or discharged on forms, meaning certificates of shipping and discharge forms are not available to all eligible individuals seeking to document their eligibility.

(13) Coast Guard Information Sheet #77 (April 1992) states that “deck logs were tra-

ditionally considered to be the property of the owners of the ships. After World War II, however, the deck and engine logbooks of vessels operated by the War Shipping Administration were turned over to that agency by the ship owners, and were destroyed during the 1970s”, meaning that continuous discharge books are not available to all eligible individuals seeking to document their eligibility.

(14) Coast Guard Information Sheet #77 (April, 1992) states “some World War II period log books do not name ports visited during the voyage due to wartime security restrictions”, meaning that company letters showing vessel names and dates of voyages are not available to all eligible individuals seeking to document their eligibility.

(b) METHODS FOR VALIDATING CERTAIN SERVICE CONSIDERED TO BE ACTIVE SERVICE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of verifying that an individual performed service under honorable conditions that satisfies the requirements of a coastwise merchant seaman who is recognized pursuant to section 401 of the GI Bill Improvement Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-202; 38 U.S.C. 106 note) as having performed active duty service for the purposes described in paragraph (3)(A), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall accept the following:

(A) In the case of an individual who served on a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition for whom no applicable Coast Guard shipping or discharge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner’s document or Z-card, or other official employment record is available, the Secretary shall provide such recognition on the basis of applicable Social Security Administration records submitted for or by the individual, together with validated testimony given by the individual or the primary next of kin of the individual that the individual performed such service during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946.

(B) In the case of an individual who served on a coastwise merchant vessel seeking such recognition for whom the applicable Coast Guard shipping or discharge form, ship logbook, merchant mariner’s document or Z-card, or other official employment record has been destroyed or otherwise become unavailable by reason of any action committed by a person responsible for the control and maintenance of such form, logbook, or record, the Secretary shall accept other official documentation demonstrating that the individual performed such service during period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946.

(C) For the purpose of determining whether to recognize service allegedly performed during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946, the Secretary shall recognize masters of seagoing vessels or other officers in command of similarly organized groups as agents of the United States who were authorized to document any individual for purposes of hiring the individual to perform service in the merchant marine or discharging an individual from such service.

(2) TREATMENT OF OTHER DOCUMENTATION.—Other documentation accepted by the Secretary of Homeland Security pursuant to paragraph (1)(B) shall satisfy all requirements for eligibility of service during the period beginning on December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31, 1946.

(3) BENEFITS ALLOWED.—

(A) BURIAL BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY.—Service of an individual that is considered active duty pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be considered as active duty service with respect to providing burial benefits under chapters 23

and 24 of title 38, United States Code, to the individual.

(B) **MEDALS, RIBBONS, AND DECORATIONS.**—An individual whose service is recognized as active duty pursuant to paragraph (1) may be awarded an appropriate medal, ribbon, or other military decoration based on such service.

(C) **STATUS OF VETERAN.**—An individual whose service is recognized as active duty pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be honored as a veteran but shall not be entitled by reason of such recognized service to any benefit that is not described in this subsection.

(4) **DETERMINATION OF COASTWISE MERCHANT SEAMAN.**—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall verify that an individual performed service under honorable conditions that satisfies the requirements of a coastwise merchant seaman pursuant to this section without regard to the sex, age, or disability of the individual during the period in which the individual served as such a coastwise merchant seaman.

(5) **DEFINITION OF PRIMARY NEXT OF KIN.**—In this section, the term “primary next of kin” with respect to an individual seeking recognition for service under this section means the closest living relative of the individual who was alive during the period of such service.

(6) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section shall take effect 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 303. DESIGNATION OF AMERICAN WORLD WAR II CITIES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall designate at least one city in the United States each year as an “American World War II City”.

(b) **CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION.**—After the designation made under subsection (c), the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall make each designation under subsection (a) based on the following criteria:

(1) Contributions by a city to the war effort during World War II, including those related to defense manufacturing, bond drives, service in the Armed Forces, and the presence of military facilities within the city.

(2) Efforts by a city to preserve the history of the city’s contributions during World War II, including through the establishment of preservation organizations or museums, restoration of World War II facilities, and recognition of World War II veterans.

(c) **FIRST AMERICAN WORLD WAR II CITY.**—The city of Wilmington, North Carolina, is designated as an “American World War II City”.

SEC. 304. OBSERVANCE OF VETERANS DAY.

(a) **TWO MINUTES OF SILENCE.**—Chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 145. Veterans Day

“The President shall issue each year a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe two minutes of silence on Veterans Day in honor of the service and sacrifice of veterans throughout the history of the Nation, beginning at—

- “(1) 3:11 p.m. Atlantic standard time;
- “(2) 2:11 p.m. eastern standard time;
- “(3) 1:11 p.m. central standard time;
- “(4) 12:11 p.m. mountain standard time;
- “(5) 11:11 a.m. Pacific standard time;
- “(6) 10:11 a.m. Alaska standard time; and
- “(7) 9:11 a.m. Hawaii-Aleutian standard time.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections for chapter 1 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“145. Veterans Day.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 2189.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most challenging issues facing the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans it serves is the huge disability backlog. According to last week’s backlog report, there were 717,000 claims for disability compensation waiting for a decision, and almost 412,000, or 57 percent, of those claims were above the Secretary’s stated processing goal of 125 days. In short, 57 percent of VA’s claims work is currently backlogged. Although I am glad we have seen some progress of late, a 57 percent backlog is not acceptable. If we are going to reach the Secretary’s goal of ending the backlog by 2015, we will all need a focused effort, and the provisions of this bill will help achieve that goal.

H.R. 2189, as amended, reflects the committee’s bipartisan efforts to bring additional transparency to this very troubling and decades-old problem. I know that other Members are here to provide a brief description of the bill that they have sponsored, or those who have worked closely on the legislation, but I want to highlight some of the key provisions.

Title I would establish a commission or a task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims and the appeals process related to those claims. Time is of the essence, so the commission would be required to submit a series of interim reports to Congress and a final report to the President and to the Congress 180 days after the commission’s first meeting. The purpose of the task force is very simple: we need the best and the brightest minds to put forward workable solutions that can be implemented immediately. Even though VA has made recent progress, it is still well short of its own goals. We must not take our foot off the gas when it comes to ending the backlog once and for all, and ideas coming from this focused task force will assist in that effort.

Title I of the bill would also direct VA to provide a supplemental report to its strategic plan to eliminate the compensation claims backlog within 60 days of enactment and every 120 days thereafter until May 25, 2015. The purpose of this provision is to hold VA accountable for the full execution of its own strategic plan. Too often, VA has

made lofty promises, and its efforts have fallen short. This provision, authored by our majority whip, will verify progress every single step of the way.

Title II of the bill would extend and expand VA’s authority to use contract examinations during its disability examination process. VA’s use of contract providers serves two purposes. First, because quality and timely exams are an essential component of the claims process, having additional providers to assist in the effort is critical. Second, use of non-VA examiners frees up the time that VA medical professionals can spend treating veterans at clinics and hospitals.

Finally, title III would require the Secretary of Defense to catalog all Vietnam-era ships as serving in either “blue” or “brown” water for purposes of awarding service-connection on a presumptive basis to veterans potentially exposed to agent orange. Currently, only veterans serving in the inland waterways, or “brown” waters, of Vietnam are eligible for compensation on a presumptive basis. The problem is that some vessels which served offshore in the “blue” waters of Vietnam sent smaller vessels ashore. Without an accurate cataloging of these visits, compensation may unfairly be denied to deserving veterans. This provision will assist VA in making accurate decisions in this sensitive area.

Enactment of H.R. 2189 will not completely solve the claims backlog, but I do think it is a good step in the right direction. I thank the subcommittee chairman, Mr. RUNYAN, and his ranking member, Ms. TITUS, for their hard work in moving the bill through the subcommittee as well. Everybody on the committee worked together to bring this piece of legislation to the floor tonight.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2189, as amended, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2189, as amended, is a bipartisan omnibus bill addressing veterans’ disability benefits and compensation. This bill includes provisions from nine other measures. These bills are part of the slate of commonsense legislation introduced in May of this year. It provides the Department of Veterans Affairs with additional tools and reforms to assist in eliminating the backlog.

Included are provisions from H.R. 2086, the Pay As You Rate Act, introduced by the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee ranking member, Representative TITUS of Nevada; H.R. 1809, the Faster Filing Act, introduced by Representative O’ROURKE from Texas; H.R. 1623, the Claims Efficiency Through Information Act, introduced by Representative NEGRETTE MCLEOD of California; H.R. 1759, introduced by Representative

RUIZ of California; H.R. 1805, the Veterans Claims Efficiency Through Automation Act, introduced by Representative KUSTER of New Hampshire; H.R. 1824, the VA Regional Office Accountability Act, introduced by Representative MENG of New York; H.R. 1521, the Disabled Veterans Red Tape Reduction Act, introduced by Representative SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York; H.R. 864, which will designate at least one city in the United States each year as an "American World War II City," introduced by Representative MCINTYRE of North Carolina; and H.R. 1288, the World War II Merchant Mariner Service Act, introduced by Representative BUTTERFIELD of North Carolina.

Collectively, H.R. 2189, as amended, gives VA real, useful tools they can begin using now. These tools will assist the Department of Veterans Affairs in making significant progress on its goal of eliminating the backlog by 2015.

The legislation will require VA to pay veterans more quickly. It will provide them with information that may lead to veterans receiving a quicker decision on their claims. It will formulate a task force to attack the growing appeals backlog, and it will require the VA to start tracking information that will help them better understand the claims inventory.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their bipartisan effort to create a smart, pragmatic solution. Together we will help VA provide better benefits and services to our veterans. I also want to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle for their work on this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2189, as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), who chairs the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MILLER for yielding to me.

As chairman of the House Veterans' Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I am keenly aware that one of the most critical issues impacting our Nation's veterans is the severe veterans' claims backlog.

Recently, the Department of Veterans Affairs reported it had a backlog of more than 400,000 veterans' benefits claims as the fiscal year ended in September. This is simply unacceptable. To help speed up the veterans' claims process, we must look at every phase of that process.

One of the first steps in this process is the medical exam to determine benefit eligibility. That is why earlier this year I introduced H.R. 2423, the Disabled Veterans' Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act, provisions of which are now contained within section 201 of H.R. 2189. This section would extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with private physicians to conduct veterans' medical disability evaluations.

With the passage of this bill, this successful program allowing physicians outside the VA to conduct contract examinations would continue for an additional 3 years, until 2016. This would allow VA to more quickly evaluate veterans' disabilities and facilitate quicker access to the care they need.

Second, this bill would also extend license portability to contract examination providers, meaning that physicians with an active State license may provide C&P exams in other States because they are working on behalf of the Federal Government. Although the VA and DOD already provide license portability for physicians working directly for them, this authority is not extended to contract examination providers. This provision is designed to facilitate the C&P examination process by allowing contract physicians the flexibility to travel and assist in areas that are experiencing lengthy delays in scheduling examinations.

Finally, this piece of legislation would also expand the number of VA regional offices that would utilize contract examinations from 10 to 15. These medical examinations are a key component of the disability claims process. By expanding the authority and scope of the contract examinations process, veterans would receive the necessary medical evidence for their claim in a timely manner.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman.

This would reduce overall claim development and processing time, resulting in the faster issuance of a final decision for the claim.

I support H.R. 2189, as amended to include my provision, and encourage all Members to support this important bill for veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MICHAUD for yielding to me.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, I strongly support the bill before us, the omnibus bill, H.R. 2189.

This legislation includes my bill, H.R. 2086, the Pay As You Rate Act, which would require the VA to pay benefits to veterans as individual components of their claims are reviewed rather than at the completion of the entire claim.

Currently, veterans typically receive payments when all medical conditions within a claim are fully adjudicated. Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan average 8.5 components in their claims. While some of these are very complex and time-consuming, other components are simpler.

The Pay As You Rate Act will require the VA to pay veterans as individual medical conditions are adju-

dicated, providing tens of thousands of veterans and their families much-needed financial support while the VA continues to work on the more complex aspects of their claims.

I thank Chairman MILLER, Ranking Member MICHAUD, and Chairman RUNYAN for including my provision and other Democratic bills in this legislation.

Collectively, the legislation before us today should assist VA in its continued effort to transform the claims process from mountains of paper to a more efficient, effective electronic system. In just the past few months, the VA has made great strides in serving our Nation's heroes by reducing the benefits backlog. The VA has set ambitious goals, and Congress should work to support those efforts. More needs to be done, and it needs to be done quickly to ensure that veterans receive the benefits they have earned in a timely fashion.

I am also pleased to have worked with Chairman MILLER on some of the task force provisions of this legislation. The provision that I added at the full committee markup would improve the proposed task force by including a subcommittee to look at the appeals process. While the VA is making significant progress in reducing the backlog, it is important that we are not creating a new backlog of appeals in the years to come. This subcommittee would be charged with making recommendations aimed at preventing that future backlog of appeals.

So I thank you, and I support the bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROONEY).

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Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Veterans Pension Protection Act as part of this important legislation.

Last year, veterans groups came to my office with a problem called "pension poaching" that targets retired veterans. Currently, the VA only considers income at the time a veteran applies for benefits, meaning it can't determine if an applicant has diverted assets to qualify for benefits.

Under this scam, unethical financial advisers and firms prey on elderly veterans by promising to help them qualify for VA pension benefits if they divert their assets into trusts or annuities and charge excessive fees for their services. GAO has identified this fraud as a major weakness in the VA pension program, leaving taxpayers and retired veterans on the hook.

My bill imposes a 36-month look-back period that would track veterans' incomes to determine if they are truly eligible. This will discourage financial predators from duping elderly veterans, help reduce the claims backlog, and ensure that low-income individuals for whom the program was intended are not robbed of their benefits.

I want to thank Congressmen SCHRAEDER, BILIRAKIS, and BARBER for their work on this bill, and especially Chairman MILLER for including it as part of this package to improve services for our Nation's veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD).

Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 2189, which includes provisions from the VA Claims Efficiency Through Information Act of 2013, which I introduced in April, that will require VA to track the time spent evaluating each medical condition in a disability compensation claim. VA would have to report the number of completed claims by region and by medical condition for the current and preceding month and year.

As Veterans Day approaches, we should remember veterans who are struggling to find work while living with service-connected disabilities. VA compensation is needed so veterans can support themselves and avoid homelessness.

The VA's legacy paper system has made it difficult to process claims of older veterans who need additional compensation later in life. Claims of younger veterans can also take longer to process because they have multiple medical conditions.

The claims backlog is a serious problem for the VA and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Since July, the Los Angeles regional office has reduced the average time to process claims from 600 days to 400 days. The VA still has a long way to go to meet its own goal of 125 days, and the backlog will not end overnight and may even go up as more men and women apply for benefits.

No one is looking at directing blame but, instead, searching for a way to work together, and Congress and the VA must be willing to explore new methods for delivering services to veterans in the 21st century for the growing veteran population.

I thank Mr. MILLER for allowing my bill to be included in his.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD for their leadership on the committee and their commitment to maintaining strong oversight over the VA and their goal to reduce the backlog.

During my time on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have enjoyed the strong bipartisanship and the committee's dedication to get results for our veterans. Whether it is between Ranking Member KIRKPATRICK and me on the Oversight Committee or Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD on the full committee, we all share the same desire to help our veterans and do everything we can to help

the VA operate more efficiently and effectively.

Fortunately for our veterans, this desire to help goes beyond the Veterans' Affairs Committee and is present in the entire House of Representatives. Earlier this year, I, along with 150 Members of the House, sent a letter to the President urging his immediate action to reduce this backlog.

Today, the House will have another opportunity to show its unity for veterans in passing H.R. 2189. This bill will aid the VA by establishing a task force to evaluate the backlog of veterans' disability claims, ensuring the VA will find innovative ways to reduce the backlog.

Currently, there are over 400,000 claims that have been waiting for over 125 days to process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. COFFMAN. Although the VA has made some progress recently, the pace is still too slow for many of our veterans waiting for their claims to be processed.

As a Marine Corps combat veteran, I am proud to join my colleagues on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to urge the passage of H.R. 2189. There are nearly 400,000 veterans in Colorado, and these men and women need Washington to step up and help the VA to reduce the backlog.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER).

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MICHAUD and our chair.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I was proud that we worked together to draft this bipartisan legislative package to help get veterans' claims settled faster and more efficiently.

Today, I am happy to join my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in passing this package, which includes my bill, the Veterans Claims Efficiency Through Automation Act. This commonsense legislation will push the VA to focus on the greater use of automation to boost efficiency and settle claims faster.

As our servicemembers and veterans transition back to civilian life, it is imperative that the VA and the DOD continue to collaborate on improving the delivery of care, eliminating the claims backlog, and mitigating the impact of sequestration.

It is simply unacceptable that so many of our heroic veterans are unable to get timely access to the care and services that they have earned. This bill is an important step toward addressing this problem, and I will keep fighting to end the backlog until the job is done.

We owe it to our men and women in uniform, to our veterans, and to our military families to do all that we can to ensure that their benefits and other services transfer from the Department

of Defense to the Veterans Administration. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure effective and timely collaboration between the two departments and to eliminate this claims backlog once and for all.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kinderhook, New York (Mr. GIBSON).

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, as I rise in support of the bill, I thank the chairman, the ranking member, and all the members of the committee and the staff for their work.

Our veterans deserve our very best effort, and it is simply taking too long to process these claims. We have got to do better. I believe this bill will take a step in the right direction.

I also appreciate the leadership of this committee including one of my bills along with this bill.

Since arriving here, I have been working on supporting our Vietnam veterans who have been exposed to agent orange. The chairman mentioned that if you served on the ground or in the river in the Navy, you get presumed coverage; but if you served just offshore, you don't get that presumed coverage. I believe that needs to change.

I have the bill to do that. Until the time of such policy change, I believe the DOD and VA need to be better organized so that we can work this out on a case-by-case basis, which is what we are doing right now. The leadership was kind enough to include that bill in this effort. I think we are going to make a positive difference.

I do want to give a shout-out to a couple of ladies in upstate New York making a difference, Carol Olszanecki and Susie Belanger, for the work that they have done on this, and we are going to continue to work it together.

I urge support of this bill.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE).

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, which will help us to reduce the unacceptably long wait times for our veterans who are waiting to hear back on service-connected disability claims.

In El Paso, Texas, I have the honor of representing almost 80,000 veterans. Right now, their average wait time out of the Waco regional office is nearly 460 days to hear back on a service-connected disability claim. I visited that office not too long ago and witnessed people carrying around the claims files for single veterans in hand trucks with the files and the paperwork measuring 3 to 4 feet in some cases.

That is why, along with PAUL COOK, I introduced bipartisan legislation earlier this year to work with no cost to reduce that wait time by informing veterans of the average wait time to file a disability claim amongst all available methods. From the slowest, which is an incomplete paper-based

claim, to the fastest, which is a fully developed claim filed online.

I am pleased that this legislation in section 109 includes this bill called the Faster Filing Act. I am convinced it will help us to get our veterans the response in the time they deserve. After all, they have sacrificed their health, their security, and their safety for ours. We need to meet our end of the obligation.

I want to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD. I also want to thank Mr. BROUN from the committee staff and Erin Snow from my legislative team for helping to write the legislation. And I encourage all of my colleagues in the House to pass this without delay.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the 12th District of Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2189. This legislation is an important step forward in addressing and resolving the VA's disability claims backlog.

We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. Unfortunately, veterans in western Pennsylvania and around the Nation are forced to endure excessive wait times for their disability claims to be processed. That is unacceptable, and our veterans deserve better.

Finding ways to better serve our veterans is one of my top priorities in Congress. The legislation we are considering today increases reporting and oversight, improves coordination between the VA and other Federal agencies, provides more training for VA claims processors, and establishes a task force to look for other ways to address the backlog. Together these actions will bring transparency and accountability to the VA all in an effort to improve customer service to our veterans and their families.

I thank House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman JEFF MILLER, Ranking Member MICHAUD, and Majority Whip KEVIN MCCARTHY for their leadership; and I look forward to continuing to work with them to find ways to better serve our veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH).

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for yielding me time, and I also want to thank Chairman MILLER for his hard work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2189. This legislation takes important steps to address the deplorable disability claims backlog at the Veterans Affairs Administration.

It does so by establishing a special task force to evaluate the full extent of the backlog and, more importantly, to determine solutions to eliminate the backlog. We all agree our veterans deserve better.

It is in this same spirit that I introduced H.R. 2185, Veterans Day Moment

of Silence Act. This bill brings together all Americans to observe 2 minutes of silence each Veterans Day. It is a time when we all, regardless of ideology, can stop and reflect on the brave service of generations of U.S. veterans.

I want to thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD for including the text of my bill into the text of H.R. 2189. Particularly, I want to thank Daniel and Michael Bendetson and their father, Dr. Peter Bendetson. As a family, they have worked relentlessly to bring the moment-of-silence provision to fruition, and I am honored to present this proposal today on their behalf in this 113th Congress.

Again, I am thankful to Mr. MICHAUD and to Chairman MILLER for enabling this provision to come to a vote today, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2189. It is a very timely bill. With hundreds of thousands of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan and with over 700,000 veterans waiting for disability determinations, it is a very important bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority whip, who has been a strong supporter of veterans issues in this legislative body.

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Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2189, legislation that will provide real relief to hundreds of thousands of our Nation's veterans.

I first want to thank Chairman MILLER because this bill includes the provisions that are a result of the GAO audit that Chairman MILLER and I requested on the Department of Veterans Affairs due to the numerous complaints from veterans in all of our districts who had to wait months and, oftentimes, years for benefits. The audit confirmed these veterans' worst complaints about the severity of the claims and the backlog.

The GAO identified the Los Angeles regional office, which serves many of my local veterans in my home district, as one of the worst in the country. According to the current data, 61 percent of the over 16,000 claims are still backlogged.

Recent data from the VA shows that the Department processed 100,000 less claims than they planned for fiscal year 2013. Clearly, the VA is unable to implement needed reforms themselves.

This legislation today addresses the backlog problems in the VA by focusing on streamlining required paperwork and communications between Federal agencies and ensuring continued and, if needed, relentless congressional oversight of the administration's timeline to clear the compensation claims backlog.

When called to serve the United States of America, our Nation's veterans have answered. It is time Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs answer their call as well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting our veterans and supporting this bill to end the backlog.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I would encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support H.R. 2189, as amended.

Once again, I want to thank Chairman MILLER and his staff for working very diligently on this piece of legislation, along with my staff on the minority side, and for bringing this forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2189 is a strong step forward in helping to resolve the severe backlog of disability claims that exist today at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I thank all the members of our committee for their bipartisan work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 2189, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2189, legislation to establish a commission to evaluate the backlog of disability claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Although the VA has made important progress on reducing the backlog over the past several months, it still fell nearly 100,000 claims short of its Fiscal Year 2013 processing goal. As of October 19th, more than 400,000 disability claims remain backlogged at the VA. This problem persists despite the fact that Congress has given the VA every resource that they have asked for to end this problem. We must remain committed to a goal of completely eliminating this backlog.

Our veterans deserve timely processing of claims so that they can get the care and compensation that they so deserve. The legislation before us today will get us closer to that goal by establishing a task force to evaluate the backlog and appeals process of claims. Furthermore, H.R. 2189 directs the commission to analyze potential improvements to the current system and solutions to solve the problem and in turn requires the VA to implement appropriate solutions.

Our brave men and women in uniform put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms, and we must do everything in our power to demonstrate our gratitude for their dedication and sacrifice. A first step in that process is ensuring that our veterans are not forced to wait hundreds of days simply to have their disability claims processed.

Mr. Speaker, we owe our veterans efficient and effective care. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2189 so that we can find a solution to ending the backlog once and for all.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2189, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2481) to amend title 38, United States Code, to codify and improve the election requirements for the receipt of educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2481

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.
- Sec. 3. Scoring of budgetary effects.
- Sec. 4. Establishment of Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 5. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity.
- Sec. 6. Five-year extension of homeless veterans reintegration programs.
- Sec. 7. Entitlement of children of certain deceased veterans to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 8. Recodification and improvement of election process for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.
- Sec. 9. Centralized reporting of veteran enrollment by certain groups, districts, and consortiums of educational institutions.
- Sec. 10. Extension of loan guaranty fee for certain subsequent loans.
- Sec. 11. Mortgage protection for members of the Armed Forces, surviving spouses, and certain veterans.
- Sec. 12. Treatment of relocation for active duty for purposes of mortgage refinancing.
- Sec. 13. Requirements for lending institutions that are creditors for obligations and liabilities covered by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.
- Sec. 14. Protection of child custody arrangements for parents who are members of the Armed Forces.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. SCORING OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory

Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Part V is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

“CHAPTER 80—VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION

“8001. Organization of Administration.

“8002. Functions of Administration.

“§ 8001. Organization of Administration

“(a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION.—There is in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration. The primary function of the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration is the administration of the programs of the Department which provide assistance related to economic opportunity to veterans and their dependents and survivors.

“(b) UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.—The Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration is under the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity, who is directly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of the Administration.

“§ 8002. Functions of Administration

“The Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration is responsible for the administration of the following programs of the Department:

“(1) Vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.

“(2) Educational assistance programs.

“(3) Veterans’ housing loan and related programs.

“(4) The veterans small business program under section 8127 of this title.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The tables of chapters at the beginning of title 38, United States Code, and of part V of title 38, United States Code, are each amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 79 the following new item:

“80. Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration 8001”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 5. UNDER SECRETARY FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.

(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 is amended by inserting after section 306 the following new section:

“§ 306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity

“(a) UNDER SECRETARY.—There is in the Department an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity, who is appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation or activity and solely on the basis of demonstrated ability in—

“(1) information technology; and

“(2) the administration of programs within the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration or programs of similar content and scope.

“(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity is

the head of, and is directly responsible to the Secretary for the operations of, the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.

“(c) VACANCIES.—(1) Whenever a vacancy in the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity occurs or is anticipated, the Secretary shall establish a commission to recommend individuals to the President for appointment to the position.

“(2) A commission established under this subsection shall be composed of the following members appointed by the Secretary:

“(A) Three persons representing education and training, vocational rehabilitation, employment, real estate, mortgage finance and related industries, and survivor benefits activities affected by the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.

“(B) Two persons representing veterans served by the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration.

“(C) Two persons who have experience in the management of private sector benefits programs of similar content and scope to the economic opportunity programs of the Department.

“(D) The Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(E) The chairman of the Veterans’ Advisory Committee on Education formed under section 3692 of this title.

“(F) One person who has held the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity, if the Secretary determines that it is desirable for such person to be a member of the commission.

“(3) A commission established under this subsection shall recommend at least three individuals for appointment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity. The commission shall submit all recommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary shall forward the recommendations to the President and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives with any comments the Secretary considers appropriate. Thereafter, the President may request the commission to recommend additional individuals for appointment.

“(4) The Assistant Secretary or Deputy Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs who performs personnel management and labor relations functions shall serve as the executive secretary of a commission established under this subsection.

(d) QUALIFICATIONS OF RECOMMENDED INDIVIDUALS.—Each individual recommended to the President by the commission for appointment to the position of Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity shall be an individual who has held a senior level position in the private sector with responsibilities relating to at least one of the following:

“(1) Education policy.

“(2) Vocational rehabilitation.

“(3) Employment.

“(4) Home loan finance.

“(5) Small business development.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 306 the following new item:

“306A. Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Title 38, United States Code, is further amended—

(1) in section 306(c)(2), by striking subparagraphs (A) and (E) and redesignating subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), and (F), as subparagraphs (A) through (D), respectively;

(2) in section 317(d), by inserting after “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity,”;

(3) in section 318(d)(2), by inserting after “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity,”;

(4) in section 516(e)(2)(C), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity”;

(5) in section 541(a)(2)(B), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity”;

(6) in section 542(a)(2)(B)(iii), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity”;

(7) in section 544(a)(2)(B)(vi), by striking “Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits” and inserting “Health, the Under Secretary for Benefits, and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity”;

(8) in section 709(c)(2)(A), by inserting after “Under Secretary for Benefits,” the following: “the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity.”;

(9) in section 7701(a), by inserting after “assistance” the following: “, other than assistance related to economic opportunity.”; and

(10) in section 7703, by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (2) and (3), respectively.

(c) **FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES.**—For fiscal years 2014 and 2015, the aggregate number of full-time equivalent employees authorized for the Veterans Benefit Administration and the Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration, as established under chapter 80 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 2, may not exceed 20,851.

(d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—Section 306A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), and the amendments made by this section, shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 6. FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION OF HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.

Section 2021(e)(F) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “2013” and inserting “2018”.

SEC. 7. ENTITLEMENT OF CHILDREN OF CERTAIN DECEASED VETERANS TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 3311(b)(9) is amended—

(1) by striking “2001, dies in line of duty while serving on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces.” and inserting “2001—”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(A) dies in line of duty while serving on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces; or

“(B) is awarded the Purple Heart for an injury and dies as a result of that injury during the 31-day period beginning on the date of the person’s discharge or release from active duty service in the Armed Forces.”.

(b) **APPLICABILITY.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a person who dies on or after September 11, 2001.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2014, and apply to payments of educational assistance for programs of education pursued after that date.

SEC. 8. RECODIFICATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF ELECTION PROCESS FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter III of chapter 33 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3326. Election to receive educational assistance

“(a) **INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE TO ELECT PARTICIPATION IN POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.**—An individual may elect to receive educational assistance under this chapter if such individual—

“(1) as of August 1, 2009—

“(A) is entitled to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of the title and has used, but retains unused, entitlement under that chapter;

“(B) is entitled to educational assistance under chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10 and has used, but retains unused, entitlement under the applicable chapter;

“(C) is entitled to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of this title but has not used any entitlement under that chapter;

“(D) is entitled to educational assistance under chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10 but has not used any entitlement under such chapter;

“(E) is a member of the Armed Forces who is eligible for receipt of basic educational assistance under chapter 30 this title and is making contributions toward such assistance under section 3011(b) or 3012(c) of this title; or

“(F) is a member of the Armed Forces who is not entitled to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of this title by reason of an election under section 3011(c)(1) or 3012(d)(1) of this title; and

“(2) as of the date of the individual’s election under this paragraph, meets the requirements for entitlement to educational assistance under this chapter.

“(b) **CESSATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD GI BILL.**—Effective as of the first month beginning on or after the date of an election under subsection (a) of an individual described by paragraph (1)(E) of that subsection, the obligation of the individual to make contributions under section 3011(b) or 3012(c) of this title, as applicable, shall cease, and the requirements of such section shall be deemed to be no longer applicable to the individual.

“(c) **REVOCAION OF REMAINING TRANSFERRED ENTITLEMENT.**—

“(1) **ELECTION TO REVOKE.**—If, on the date an individual described in paragraph (1)(A) or (1)(C) of subsection (a) makes an election under that subsection, a transfer of the entitlement of the individual to basic educational assistance under section 3020 of this title is in effect and a number of months of the entitlement so transferred remain unutilized, the individual may elect to revoke all or a portion of the entitlement so transferred that remains unutilized.

“(2) **AVAILABILITY OF REVOKED ENTITLEMENT.**—Any entitlement revoked by an individual under this paragraph shall no longer be available to the dependent to whom transferred, but shall be available to the individual instead for educational assistance under chapter 33 of this title in accordance with the provisions of this section.

“(3) **AVAILABILITY OF UNREVOKED ENTITLEMENT.**—Any entitlement described in paragraph (1) that is not revoked by an individual in accordance with that paragraph shall remain available to the dependent or dependents concerned in accordance with the current transfer of such entitlement under section 3020 of this title.

“(d) **POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2) and except as provided in subsection (e), an individual making an election under subsection (a) shall be entitled to educational assistance under this chapter in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, instead of basic educational assistance under chap-

ter 30 this title, or educational assistance under chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10, as applicable.

“(2) **LIMITATION ON ENTITLEMENT FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.**—In the case of an individual making an election under subsection (a) who is described by paragraph (1)(A) of that subsection, the number of months of entitlement of the individual to educational assistance under this chapter 33 shall be the number of months equal to—

“(A) the number of months of unused entitlement of the individual under chapter 30 of this title, as of the date of the election, plus

“(B) the number of months, if any, of entitlement revoked by the individual under subsection (c)(1).

“(e) **CONTINUING ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE NOT AVAILABLE UNDER 9/11 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—In the event educational assistance to which an individual making an election under subsection (a) would be entitled under chapter 30 of this title, or chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10, as applicable, is not authorized to be available to the individual under the provisions of this chapter the individual shall remain entitled to such educational assistance in accordance with the provisions of the applicable chapter.

“(2) **CHARGE FOR USE OF ENTITLEMENT.**—The utilization by an individual of entitlement under paragraph (1) shall be chargeable against the entitlement of the individual to educational assistance under this chapter at the rate of one month of entitlement under this chapter for each month of entitlement utilized by the individual under paragraph (1) (as determined as if such entitlement were utilized under the provisions of chapter 30 of this title, or chapter 107, 1606, or 1607 of title 10, as applicable).

“(f) **ADDITIONAL POST-9/11 ASSISTANCE FOR MEMBERS HAVING MADE CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD GI BILL.**—

“(1) **ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.**—In the case of an individual making an election under subsection (a) who is described by subparagraph (A), (C), or (E) of paragraph (1) of that subsection, the amount of educational assistance payable to the individual under this chapter 33 as a monthly stipend payable under paragraph (1)(B) of section 3313(c) of this title, or under paragraphs (2) through (7) of that section (as applicable), shall be the amount otherwise payable as a monthly stipend under the applicable paragraph increased by the amount equal to—

“(A) the total amount of contributions toward basic educational assistance made by the individual under section 3011(b) or 3012(c) of this title, as of the date of the election, multiplied by

“(B) the fraction—

“(i) the numerator of which is—

“(I) the number of months of entitlement to basic educational assistance under chapter 30 of this title remaining to the individual at the time of the election; plus

“(II) the number of months, if any, of entitlement under such chapter 30 revoked by the individual under subsection (c)(1); and

“(ii) the denominator of which is 36 months.

“(2) **MONTHS OF REMAINING ENTITLEMENT FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.**—In the case of an individual covered by paragraph (1) who is described by subsection (a)(1)(E), the number of months of entitlement to basic educational assistance remaining to the individual for purposes of paragraph (1)(B)(i)(II) shall be 36 months.

“(3) **TIMING OF PAYMENT.**—The amount payable with respect to an individual under paragraph (1) shall be paid to the individual together with the last payment of the monthly stipend payable to the individual under paragraph (1)(B) of section 3313(c) of

this title, or under subsections (b) through (g) of that section (as applicable), before the exhaustion of the individual's entitlement to educational assistance under this chapter.

“(g) CONTINUING ENTITLEMENT TO ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CRITICAL SKILLS OR SPECIALTY AND ADDITIONAL SERVICE.—An individual making an election under subsection (a)(1) who, at the time of the election, is entitled to increased educational assistance under section 3015(d) of this title, or section 16131(i) of title 10, or supplemental educational assistance under subchapter III of chapter 30 of this title, shall remain entitled to such increased educational assistance or supplemental educational assistance in the utilization of entitlement to educational assistance under this chapter, in an amount equal to the quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, equivalent of the monthly amount of such increased educational assistance or supplemental educational assistance payable with respect to the individual at the time of the election.

“(h) ALTERNATIVE ELECTION BY SECRETARY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an individual who, on or after October 1, 2014, submits to the Secretary an election under this section that the Secretary determines is clearly against the interests of the individual, the Secretary may make an alternative election on behalf of the individual that the Secretary determines is in the best interests of the individual.

“(2) NOTICE.—If the Secretary makes an election on behalf of an individual under this subsection, the Secretary shall notify the individual by not later than seven days after making such election and shall provide the individual with a 30-day period, beginning on the date of the individual's receipt of such notice, during which the individual may modify or revoke the election made by the Secretary on the individual's behalf. The Secretary shall include, as part of such notice, a clear statement of why the alternative election made by the Secretary is in the best interests of the individual as compared to the election submitted by the individual. The Secretary shall provide the notice required under this paragraph by electronic means whenever possible.

“(i) IRREVOCABILITY OF ELECTIONS.—An election under subsection (a) or (c)(1) is irrevocable.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“326. Election to receive educational assistance.”.

(c) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Subsection (c) of section 5003 of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-252; 38 U.S.C. 3301 note) is hereby repealed.

SEC. 9. CENTRALIZED REPORTING OF VETERAN ENROLLMENT BY CERTAIN GROUPS, DISTRICTS, AND CONSORTIUMS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3684(a) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “32, 33,” after “31,”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘educational institution’ may include a group, district, or consortium of separately accredited educational institutions located in the same State that are organized in a manner that facilitates the centralized reporting of the enrollments in such group, district, or consortium of institutions.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to reports submitted on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 10. EXTENSION OF LOAN GUARANTY FEE FOR CERTAIN SUBSEQUENT LOANS.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 3729(b)(2)(B) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking “October 1, 2017” and inserting “October 1, 2018”; and

(2) in clause (ii), by striking “October 1, 2017” and inserting “October 1, 2018”.

SEC. 11. MORTGAGE PROTECTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, SURVIVING SPOUSES, AND CERTAIN VETERANS.

(a) MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, SURVIVING SPOUSES, AND CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 303 the following new section:

“SEC. 303A. MORTGAGES AND TRUST DEEDS OF CERTAIN SERVICEMEMBERS, SURVIVING SPOUSES, AND DISABLED VETERANS.

“(a) MORTGAGE AS SECURITY.—This section applies only to an obligation on real or personal property owned by a covered individual that—

“(1) originated at any time and for which the covered individual is still obligated; and

“(2) is secured by a mortgage, trust deed, or other security in the nature of a mortgage.

“(b) STAY OF PROCEEDINGS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with subsection (d)(1), in a judicial action pending or in a nonjudicial action commenced during a covered time period to enforce an obligation described in subsection (a), a court—

“(A) may, after a hearing and on its own motion, stay the proceedings until the end of the covered time period; and

“(B) shall, upon application by a covered individual, stay the proceedings until the end of the covered time period.

“(2) OBLIGATION TO STOP PROCEEDINGS.—Upon receipt of notice provided under subsection (d)(1), a mortgagee, trustee, or other creditor seeking to foreclose on real property secured by an obligation covered by this section using any judicial or nonjudicial proceedings shall immediately stop any such proceeding until the end of the covered time period.

“(c) SALE OR FORECLOSURE.—A sale, judicial or nonjudicial foreclosure, or seizure of property for a breach of an obligation described in subsection (a) that is not stayed under subsection (b) shall not be valid during a covered time period except—

“(1) upon a court order granted before such sale, judicial or nonjudicial foreclosure, or seizure with a return made and approved by the court; or

“(2) if made pursuant to an agreement as provided in section 107.

“(d) NOTICE REQUIRED.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To be covered under this section, a covered individual shall provide to the mortgagee, trustee, or other creditor written notice that such individual is so covered.

“(2) MANNER.—Written notice under paragraph (1) may be provided electronically.

“(3) TIME.—Notice provided under paragraph (1) shall be provided during the covered time period.

“(4) CONTENTS.—With respect to a servicemember described in subsection (g)(1)(A), notice shall include—

“(A) a copy of the servicemember's official military orders, or any notification, certification, or verification from a servicemember's commanding officer that provides evidence of servicemember's eligibility for special pay as described in subsection (g)(1)(A); or

“(B) an official notice using a form designed under paragraph (5).

“(5) OFFICIAL FORMS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall design and distribute an official Department of Defense form that can be used by an individual to give notice under paragraph (1).

“(B) USE OF OFFICIAL FORM NOT REQUIRED.—Failure by any individual to use a form designed or distributed under subparagraph (A) to provide notice shall not make such provision of notice invalid.

“(e) AGGREGATE DURATION.—The aggregate duration for which a covered individual (except a servicemember described in subsection (g)(1)(A)) may be covered under this section is one year.

“(f) MISDEMEANOR.—A person who knowingly makes or causes to be made a sale, foreclosure, or seizure of property that is prohibited by subsection (c), or who knowingly attempts to do so, shall be fined as provided in title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term ‘covered individual’ means the following individuals:

“(A) A servicemember who is or was eligible for hostile fire or imminent danger special pay under section 310 of title 37, United States Code, during a period of military service.

“(B) A servicemember placed on convalescent status, including a servicemember transferred to the temporary disability retired list under section 1202 or 1205 of title 10, United States Code.

“(C) A veteran who was medically discharged and retired under chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, except for a veteran described in section 1207 of such title.

“(D) A surviving spouse (as defined in section 101(3) of title 38, United States Code, and in accordance with section 103 of such title) of a servicemember who died while in military service if such spouse is the successor in interest to property covered under subsection (a).

“(2) COVERED TIME PERIOD.—The term ‘covered time period’ means the following time periods:

“(A) With respect to a servicemember who is or was eligible for hostile fire or imminent danger special pay under section 310 of title 37, United States Code, during a period of military service, during the period beginning on the first day on which the servicemember is or was eligible for such special pay during such period of military service and ending on the date that is one year after the last day of such period of military service.

“(B) With respect to a servicemember described in paragraph (1)(B), during the one-year period beginning on the date on which the servicemember is placed on convalescent status or transferred to the temporary disability retired list under section 1202 or 1205 of title 10, United States Code.

“(C) With respect to a veteran described in paragraph (1)(C), during the one-year period beginning on the date of the retirement of such veteran.

“(D) With respect to a surviving spouse of a servicemember as described in paragraph (1)(D), during the one-year period beginning on the date on which the spouse receives notice of the death of the servicemember.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 303 the following new item:

“Sec. 303A. Mortgages and trust deeds of certain servicemembers, surviving spouses, and disabled veterans.”.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 107 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 517) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘servicemember’ includes any covered individual under section 303A.”.

(b) INCREASED CIVIL PENALTIES FOR MORTGAGE VIOLATIONS.—Paragraph (3) of section 801(b) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 597(b)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

“(3) to vindicate the public interest, assess a civil penalty—

“(A) with respect to a violation of section 207, 303, or 303A regarding real property—

“(i) in an amount not exceeding \$110,000 for a first violation; and

“(ii) in an amount not exceeding \$220,000 for any subsequent violation; and

“(B) with respect to any other violation of this Act—

“(i) in an amount not exceeding \$55,000 for a first violation; and

“(ii) in an amount not exceeding \$110,000 for any subsequent violation.”.

(c) CREDIT DISCRIMINATION.—Section 108 of such Act (50 U.S.C. App. 518) is amended—

(1) by striking “Application by” and inserting “(a) APPLICATION OR RECEIPT.—Application by”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b) ELIGIBILITY.—In addition to the protections under subsection (a), an individual who is entitled to any right or protection provided under this Act may not be denied or refused credit or be subject to any other action described under paragraphs (1) through (6) of subsection (a) solely by reason of such entitlement.”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 303A of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, as added by subsection (a), and the amendments made by this section, shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 12. TREATMENT OF RELOCATION FOR ACTIVE DUTY FOR PURPOSES OF MORTGAGE REFINANCING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 531 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 303A, as added by section 11(a)(1), the following new section:

“SEC. 303B. TREATMENT OF RELOCATION FOR ACTIVE DUTY FOR PURPOSES OF MORTGAGE REFINANCING.

“(a) TREATMENT OF ABSENCE FROM RESIDENCE DUE TO ACTIVE DUTY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), if, at any time that a servicemember who is the mortgagor under an existing mortgage does not reside in the residence that secures the existing mortgage because of relocation described in subsection (c)(1)(B), such servicemember inquires about or applies for a covered refinancing mortgage, such servicemember shall be, for all purposes relating to the covered refinancing mortgage, including such inquiry or application and eligibility for and compliance with any underwriting criteria and standards regarding such covered refinancing mortgage, considered to occupy the residence that secures the existing mortgage to be paid or prepaid by such covered refinancing mortgage as the principal residence of the servicemember during the period of any such relocation.

“(2) LIMITATION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to a servicemember at any time if, during the five-year period preceding such time, the servicemember entered into a covered refinancing mortgage pursuant to this section.

“(b) MORTGAGES ORIGINATED BEFORE PERIOD MILITARY SERVICE.—If a covered refinancing mortgage is entered into pursuant to this section with respect to an existing mortgage that originated before the period of the servicemember’s military service, such covered refinancing mortgage shall be

deemed to be an obligation that originated before the period of the servicemember’s military service and for which the servicemember is still obligated for purposes of section 303(a)(1).

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) EXISTING MORTGAGE.—The term ‘existing mortgage’ means a mortgage that is secured by a 1- to 4-family residence, including a condominium or a share in a cooperative ownership housing association, that was the principal residence of a servicemember for a period that—

“(A) had a duration of 13 consecutive months or longer; and

“(B) ended upon the relocation of the servicemember caused by the servicemember receiving military orders for a permanent change of station or to deploy with a military unit, or as an individual in support of a military operation, for a period of not less than 90 days that did not allow the servicemember to continue to occupy such residence as a principal residence.

“(2) COVERED REFINANCING MORTGAGE.—The term ‘covered refinancing mortgage’ means any mortgage—

“(A) that is made for the purpose of paying or prepaying, and extinguishing, the outstanding obligations under an existing mortgage or mortgages; and

“(B) that is secured by the same residence that secured such existing mortgage or mortgages.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 303A the following new item:

“Sec. 303B. Treatment of relocation for active duty for purposes of mortgage refinancing.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 303B of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, as added by subsection (a), and the amendments made by this section, shall take effect on October 1, 2014.

SEC. 13. REQUIREMENTS FOR LENDING INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE CREDITORS FOR OBLIGATIONS AND LIABILITIES COVERED BY THE SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT.

Section 207 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 527) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as subsections (e) and (f), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (c) the following new subsection (d):

“(d) LENDING INSTITUTION REQUIREMENTS.—

“(1) COMPLIANCE OFFICERS.—Each lending institution subject to the requirements of this section shall designate an employee of the institution as a compliance officer who is responsible for ensuring the institution’s compliance with this section and for distributing information to servicemembers whose obligations and liabilities are covered by this section.

“(2) TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER.—During any fiscal year, a lending institution subject to the requirements of this section that had annual assets for the preceding fiscal year of \$10,000,000,000 or more shall maintain a toll-free telephone number and shall make such telephone number available on the primary Internet website of the institution.”.

SEC. 14. PROTECTION OF CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARENTS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION.—Title II of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 521 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 208. CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION.

“(a) RESTRICTION ON TEMPORARY CUSTODY ORDER.—If a court renders a temporary order for custodial responsibility for a child based solely on a deployment or anticipated de-

ployment of a parent who is a servicemember, then the court shall require that, upon the return of the servicemember from deployment, the custody order that was in effect immediately preceding the temporary order shall be reinstated, unless the court finds that such a reinstatement is not in the best interest of the child, except that any such finding shall be subject to subsection (b).

“(b) LIMITATION ON CONSIDERATION OF MEMBER’S DEPLOYMENT IN DETERMINATION OF CHILD’S BEST INTEREST.—If a motion or a petition is filed seeking a permanent order to modify the custody of the child of a servicemember, no court may consider the absence of the servicemember by reason of deployment, or the possibility of deployment, as the sole factor in determining the best interest of the child.

“(c) NO FEDERAL JURISDICTION OR RIGHT OF ACTION OR REMOVAL.—Nothing in this section shall create a Federal right of action or otherwise give rise to Federal jurisdiction or create a right of removal.

“(d) PREEMPTION.—In any case where State law applicable to a child custody proceeding involving a temporary order as contemplated in this section provides a higher standard of protection to the rights of the parent who is a deploying servicemember than the rights provided under this section with respect to such temporary order, the appropriate court shall apply the higher State standard.

“(e) DEPLOYMENT DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘deployment’ means the movement or mobilization of a servicemember to a location for a period of longer than 60 days and not longer than 540 days pursuant to temporary or permanent official orders—

“(1) that are designated as unaccompanied;

“(2) for which dependent travel is not authorized; or

“(3) that otherwise do not permit the movement of family members to that location.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of such Act is amended by adding at the end of the items relating to title II the following new item:

“208. Child custody protection.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 2481, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 2481 represents the collective work of our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee. Provisions of this bill streamline eligibility for veterans’ GI Bill benefits that would ensure that surviving loved ones of servicemembers who die as a result of service have all the educational assistance benefits that they are entitled to and makes improvements to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

I know other Members are here today to speak on provisions of this bill that they have authored, so at this time, I will focus on just a few areas.

Sections 4 and 5 of the bill would establish, within existing resources, a Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration at the Department of Veterans Affairs as an Under Secretary to head the effort. The purpose of creating a parallel administration is to serve alongside VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, the Veterans Health Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration; it is to raise in importance the issues affecting veterans' readjustment to civilian life.

Too often these issues, such as education, job training, and vocational counseling, do not receive the focus that they deserve because they are subsumed within an administration that also has responsibility for disability claims processing. Highlighting and emphasizing the importance of jobs and careers for veterans was an important reason why the Committee on Veterans' Affairs created for itself a separate Economic Opportunity Subcommittee several years ago. These provisions would advance the same model within the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is my hope that the new Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity would be a powerful advocate serving veterans' readjustment interests, whether at school, during TAP transition classes for departing servicemembers, or as a liaison with the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service.

The second provision I would like to touch on was authored by the late C.W. Bill Young. It would permit the children of certain severely disabled servicemembers, who die shortly after their military service and who have received a Purple Heart, to be eligible for the Fry Educational Scholarship. The Fry Scholarship provides certain post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for the children of servicemembers, but only those who die on Active Duty.

Chairman Young rightly believed that the kids of those who may have been mortally wounded in service but who died shortly thereafter ought to be eligible for this benefit as well. I am honored to say that section 7 of the bill carries forward Bill's provision and that his memory lives on in our work today in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 2481, as amended, the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2481, as amended, makes several significant improvements to VA's structure as well as several benefits programs. This bill represents the work of Members, both on and off the Veterans' Affairs Committee, to improve veterans lives. I want to take a few minutes to highlight two of the key provisions of this measure.

Mr. CUMMINGS of Maryland originally introduced H.R. 1842, the Military Family Home Protection Act. Language from this measure is included in H.R. 2481, as amended, and aims to strengthen the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act foreclosure protections for servicemembers and their families during the course of deployment, regardless of when the home was purchased. Military homeowners deserve these protections so they can have peace of mind while they serve. We all have heard the horror stories of families fighting for their homes and, sadly, losing their homes while the family members were in harm's way in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The 5-year extension of the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program in this bill is vital to veterans. There are still approximately 62,000 homeless veterans on the streets each night. This program provides services to assist in reintegrating them into meaningful employment in the labor force. The HVRP is the only nationwide program that focuses on assisting homeless veterans by connecting them to employment. If we are to meet the goal of ending homeless veterans by 2015, we need to extend the help that is included in this bill.

I strongly support H.R. 2481, as amended, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FLORES), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2481, as amended, and I thank Chairman MILLER for allowing me to express my support for this bill today.

This bill contains the original text of the Veterans GI Bill Enrollment Clarification Act of 2013, which I introduced in June, as well as the collective work of the subcommittee that I am honored to chair, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

I want to thank the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Mr. TAKANO, as well as Chairman MILLER and ranking member of the full committee, Mr. MICHAUD, for bringing this bill to the floor. Finally, I also thank the other members of the committee who authored the provisions that are included in this bill for their thoughtful legislation.

Mr. Speaker, sections 4 and 5, originally authored by Chairman MILLER, would authorize using existing VA resources for the creation of a fourth administration at VA, which will improve oversight over VA's education, vocational rehabilitation, and home loan programs, and the Center for Veterans Enterprise. Too often, these programs are overshadowed by VA's efforts to reduce the disability claims backlog, and I am hopeful that this new fourth administration will streamline oversight

over these important VA programs that will help veterans reach economic success.

Section 6 includes Mr. COOK's bill that would extend the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, which provides grant funding for job training services for homeless veterans.

Section 7 includes a bill authored by our late colleague, Mr. Young of Florida. This section would modify the Fry Scholarship program to include the children of certain veterans who die within 31 days of discharge from a service-connected cause. This is an issue that I know Mr. Young was personally passionate about, and I am thankful that we are able to include it in this bill that is being considered today.

Section 8 includes the original text of my bill, H.R. 2481, that would clarify the process to assist veterans in choosing the best GI Bill benefit to meet their unique education needs. I believe that, by making this one small change, we can reduce veterans' wait times and streamline their use of the benefits that they have earned.

Section 9 reflects a bill introduced by Mr. CALVERT and cosponsored by Mr. TAKANO to streamline the reporting of student data by college consortiums.

Section 10 would extend several existing VA loan guarantee funding fees to provide CutGo funding offsets for the costs of the bill.

Sections 11 and 12 contain the provisions of Mr. CUMMINGS' bill to expand several mortgage foreclosure and refinancing-related protections and rights in the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to surviving spouses and Active Duty members. The section would also clarify refinancing options available for servicemembers, as well as penalties for violations of the SCRA law.

I want to thank Mr. CUMMINGS and his staff for working with us on this section over the past year. I believe these provisions would go a long way in protecting servicemembers and their families.

The final section would amend SCRA to protect child custody agreements of servicemembers while they are deployed. This provision, sponsored by Mr. TURNER, has passed the House multiple times in the last few Congresses, and it is designed to ensure that military service doesn't impact existing child custody agreements unless it is in the best interests of the child.

Once again, I thank all of the Members for their thoughtful contributions to this bill, and I encourage its passage.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maine, the ranking member of our committee, for yielding time, and I thank Chairman FLORES of the subcommittee for his hard work.

I am pleased to see that the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013 is receiving a vote today on the floor, as every Member of this distinguished

body has servicemembers in his or her congressional district, and all of us believe that taking care of these heroes, when they complete their service, should be a top priority.

Bipartisanship in this Congress is rare, but Republicans and Democrats all agree that Congress should be making it easier for our servicemembers as they transition back to civilian life.

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The House Veterans' Affairs Committee has a strong track record of being the least partisan committee in Congress, and this very bill is consistent with that record, as it passed in committee unanimously this past September.

I am especially proud that H.R. 331, which I originally introduced with my Republican colleague from California, Representative CALVERT, was included in the final legislation. With Riverside Community College District campuses in both of our congressional districts and with Riverside County having the eighth largest veterans population in the country, I am proud that Representative CALVERT and I joined forces to make it easier for veterans to receive their veterans education benefits.

Our legislation will help decrease education benefit processing times by eliminating unnecessary and duplicative paperwork for individual community colleges that are part of a group, district, or consortium. Specifically, it will allow a multicollege system, such as the Riverside Community College District, to verify a student's class enrollment number with the Department of Veterans Affairs instead of requiring each individual constituent college to do so. Centralizing the reporting for veterans enrollment at multicollege systems will be a great benefit to veterans in the Inland Empire, as unnecessary and duplicative paperwork delays benefits, increases processing times, and increases costs to the Department of Veterans Affairs and multicollege systems, such as the Riverside Community College District.

I am also pleased to see the Military Family Home Protection Act, of which I was a lead cosponsor, included in the final bill. This portion of the legislation will expand foreclosure protections to all servicemembers regardless of when they purchased their home and will stay home foreclosures for servicemembers who are receiving hostile or imminent danger pay. It will also prohibit banks from discriminating against servicemembers, veterans, and surviving spouses who are looking for home loans and mortgages. Finally, it will double civil penalties for mortgage-related violations.

The veterans who so bravely served this country deserve every opportunity for success and every protection possible.

I thank my Republican colleagues from the Veterans' Affairs Committee for pushing this legislation, and I look forward to its passage.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act of 2013.

As our servicemembers return home from war, it is incumbent on all of us and all Americans to ensure that they are receiving the support and opportunities they need to succeed in civilian life. This bill establishes the Economic Opportunity Administration, which would focus its efforts entirely on veteran education, employment, small business, and housing. The bill also contains the text of legislation I introduced earlier this year along with my colleague from California, Representative TAKANO, which is vital to my and his congressional districts.

For community college districts that have multiple colleges as part of the district, the Department of Veterans Affairs requires each campus to certify that their veteran students are enrolled for a specific number of classes before the VA will disburse student benefits. Under current regulations, each of the colleges in the district must write letters to other colleges within the district to verify their classes and meet regulations. For the Riverside Community College District in Riverside, California, this unnecessary paperwork delays benefits to veterans and increases processing times and the costs to college districts as well as the VA.

This bill, which was wrapped into H.R. 2481, corrects that problem by permitting each college in the district to verify and certify veterans for all classes attended within the district rather than just for classes attended at that particular college. H.R. 331 would update the rules, which would mean veterans would receive their benefits sooner, and the VA would have less paperwork to process.

I would like to thank subcommittee Chairman FLORES and his staff, Ranking Member TAKANO, full committee Chairman MILLER, and full committee Ranking Member MICHAUD for their efforts to support our veterans, and specifically for the Veterans Economic Opportunity Act.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding; and I want to thank Chairman MILLER, Congressman FLORES, Ranking Member MICHAUD, Congressman TAKANO, and members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for working together in a truly bipartisan way to include provisions in this legislation to extend home foreclosure provisions to our servicemembers, veterans with disabilities, and surviving spouses.

For the last 2 years, I have aggressively investigated illegal foreclosures, inflated fees, and other abuses by banks against our servicemembers, veterans, and their families. In my opin-

ion, no one is more deserving of our help than our servicemembers who have sacrificed so much, who have given their blood, sweat, tears, and sometimes their lives. Yet under current law, certain servicemembers, veterans with disabilities, and surviving spouses are not receiving the critical protections they need and truly deserve. As a result, banks are foreclosing on homes at the very moment when our heroes and their families deserve our support.

As a country, we can and must do better. That is why I introduced H.R. 1842, the Military Family Home Protection Act, which the House Veterans' Affairs Committee included in the bill before us today, and I am most grateful. These commonsense provisions will better protect military families and veterans with disabilities by closing loopholes and providing needed reforms to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

These provisions are supported by the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Military Officers Association of America, Gold Star Wives of America, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, all of whom have written strong letters of support. This legislation has overwhelming bipartisan support, and I thank every single member of the committee for their continued support.

With Veterans Day approaching, I believe one of the best ways to honor our veterans and those that serve is to help keep a roof over their heads after they have sacrificed so much for our freedom and for our way of life. I ask every Member to support this effort.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Dayton, Ohio (Mr. TURNER), home of the United States Air Force Museum.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for his diligence on a provision of this bill that would protect the custody rights of our servicemembers. I also want to thank the ranking member and the staff of the VA Committee for also being so diligent as to include this provision.

This provision has passed the House five times as part of the National Defense Authorization Act and three times as provisions coming from the VA Committee. It is an essential provision that would provide servicemembers the confidence and protection of the custody arrangements once they are deployed.

Unbelievably, across this Nation, family law court judges have been taking custody away from servicemembers upon their return from deployment, using their time against them in deciding a custody case. There are even cases in our Nation where the family law court judge took custody away based on the potential threat of deployment of servicemembers. I don't think anyone believes that it is in the best

interest of the child for them to believe that there is something wrong with serving your country.

We have a national military that needs a national standard. Men and women who are serving need to know what standard is going to be applied. Many of these cases have multiple State provisions. This does not provide Federal jurisdiction for custody cases. It retains the State's authority on this, but merely provides a minimum standard upon which servicemembers can rely that says that their custody decisions will not be based solely upon the issue of their past or future deployment. This is the minimum that we could do for our servicemembers.

This arises in part out of the case of Eva Slusher, who was a Kentucky National Guard member. Her daughter, Sara, she had raised for 6 years alone after divorce. Upon returning from deployment, the court awarded her ex-husband custody. She fought for 2 years and spent \$25,000 to get her daughter back. She should be the type of servicemember who knows that there is a standard so that when she returns, that her time away will not be used against her.

This is important also so that servicemembers, when they are making arrangements upon departure, do not have the anxiety, when they are deployed, that when they return they might not get their families back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. TURNER. Eva Slusher famously said that, under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, she is required to get her job back when she returns. She believes that, under that act, she should also be able to get her child back.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank Chairman MILLER for bringing this bill to the floor, as well as Chairman FLORES and Ranking Member TAKANO of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for their work on this particular bill, and I would encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it unanimously.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the members of our committee for their bipartisan efforts in bringing this piece of legislation to the floor.

I would ask all Members here to support this as we go forward with a vote to pass H.R. 2481, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2481, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to benefits, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DENIAL OF BENEFIT REQUIREMENT

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1405) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include an appeals form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1405

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. INCLUSION OF APPEALS FORMS IN NOTICES OF DECISIONS OF BENEFITS DENIALS ISSUED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5104(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "and (2)" and inserting "(2)"; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", and (3) a form that may be used to file an appeal of the decision".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to decisions made by the Secretary under section 511 of title 38, United States Code, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SECTION 1. INCLUSION OF NOTICE OF DISAGREEMENT FORMS IN NOTICES OF DECISIONS OF BENEFITS DENIALS ISSUED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5104(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "and (2)" and inserting "(2)"; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", and (3) a form that may be used to file a notice of disagreement to the decision".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to decisions made by the Secretary under section 511 of title 38, United States Code, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2. PROVISION OF STATUS UNDER LAW BY HONORING CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS AS VETERANS.

(a) VETERAN STATUS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 107 the following new section:

"§ 107A. Honoring as veterans certain persons who performed service in the reserve components

"Any person who is entitled under chapter 1223 of title 10 to retired pay for nonregular service or, but for age, would be entitled under such chapter to retired pay for nonregular service shall be honored as a veteran but shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of this section."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 107 the following new item:

"107A. Honoring as veterans certain persons who performed service in the reserve components."

(b) CLARIFICATION REGARDING BENEFITS.—No person may receive any benefit under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs solely by reason of section 107A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 3. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO CASE-TRACKING INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 59 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 5906. Provision of access to case-tracking information

"(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) In accordance with subsection (b), the Secretary shall provide a covered employee with access to the case-tracking system to provide a veteran with information regarding the status of a claim submitted by such veteran if such employee is acting under written permission or a power of attorney executed by such veteran.

"(2) In providing a covered employee with access to the case-tracking system under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure—

"(A) that such access—

"(i) is provided in a manner that does not allow such employee to modify the data contained in such system; and

"(ii) does not include access to medical records; and

"(B) that each time a covered employee accesses such system, the employee must certify that such access is for official purposes only.

"(b) PRIVACY CERTIFICATION COURSE.—The Secretary may not provide a covered employee with access to the case-tracking system under subsection (a)(1) unless the covered employee has successfully completed a certification course on privacy issues provided by the Secretary.

"(c) TREATMENT OF DISCLOSURE.—The access to information by a covered employee pursuant to subsection (a)(1) shall be deemed to be—

"(1) a covered disclosure under section 552a(b) of title 5; and

"(2) a permitted disclosure under regulations promulgated under section 264(c) of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. 1320d-2 note).

"(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) The term 'case-tracking system' means the system of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides information regarding the status of a claim submitted by a veteran.

"(2) The term 'covered employee' means an employee of a State or local governmental agency (including a veterans service officer) who, in the course of carrying out the responsibilities of such employment, assists veterans with claims for any benefit under the laws administered by the Secretary."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"5906. Provision of access to case-tracking information."

SEC. 4. IMPROVEMENT OF FIDUCIARIES FOR VETERANS.

(a) APPOINTMENT AND SUPERVISION.—

(1) Section 5502 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 5502. Appointment of fiduciaries

"(a) APPOINTMENT.—(1) Where it appears to the Secretary that the interest of the beneficiary would be served thereby, payment of benefits under any law administered by the Secretary may be made directly to the beneficiary or to a relative or some other fiduciary for the use and benefit of the beneficiary, regardless of any legal disability on the part of the beneficiary.

“(2) When in the opinion of the Secretary, a temporary fiduciary is needed in order to protect the benefits provided to the beneficiary under any law administered by the Secretary while a determination of incompetency is being made or appealed or a fiduciary is appealing a determination of misuse, the Secretary may appoint one or more temporary fiduciaries for a period not to exceed 120 days. If a final decision has not been made within 120 days, the Secretary may not continue the appointment of the fiduciary without obtaining a court order for appointment of a guardian, conservator, or other fiduciary under the authority provided in section 5502(b) of this title.

“(b) APPEALS.—(1) If the Secretary determines a beneficiary to be mentally incompetent for purposes of appointing a fiduciary under this chapter, the Secretary shall provide such beneficiary with a written statement detailing the reasons for such determination.

“(2) A beneficiary whom the Secretary has determined to be mentally incompetent for purposes of appointing a fiduciary under this chapter may appeal such determination.

“(c) MODIFICATION.—(1) A beneficiary for whom the Secretary appoints a fiduciary under this chapter may, at any time, request the Secretary to—

“(A) remove the fiduciary so appointed; and

“(B) have a new fiduciary appointed.

“(2) The Secretary shall comply with a request under paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines that the request is made in good faith and—

“(A) the fiduciary requested to be removed receives a fee from the beneficiary and a suitable volunteer fiduciary is available to assist the beneficiary; or

“(B) the beneficiary provides credible information that the fiduciary requested to be removed is—

“(i) not acting in the interest of the beneficiary; or

“(ii) unable to effectively serve the beneficiary because of an irreconcilable personality conflict or disagreement.

“(3) The Secretary shall ensure that any removal or new appointment of a fiduciary under paragraph (1) does not delay or interrupt the beneficiary's receipt of benefits administered by the Secretary.

“(d) INDEPENDENCE.—A fiduciary appointed by the Secretary shall operate independently of the Department to determine the actions that are in the interest of the beneficiary.

“(e) PREDESIGNATION.—A veteran may pre-designate a fiduciary by—

“(1) submitting written notice to the Secretary of the predesignated fiduciary; or

“(2) submitting a form provided by the Secretary for such purpose.

“(f) APPOINTMENT OF NON-PREDESIGNATED FIDUCIARY.—If a beneficiary designates an individual to serve as a fiduciary under subsection (e) and the Secretary appoints an individual not so designated as the fiduciary for such beneficiary, the Secretary shall notify such beneficiary of—

“(1) the reason why such designated individual was not appointed; and

“(2) the ability of the beneficiary to modify the appointed fiduciary under subsection (c).

“(g) PRIORITY OF APPOINTMENT.—In appointing a fiduciary under this chapter, if a beneficiary does not designate a fiduciary pursuant to subsection (e), to the extent possible the Secretary shall appoint a person who is—

“(1) a relative of the beneficiary;

“(2) appointed as guardian of the beneficiary by a court of competent jurisdiction; or

“(3) authorized to act on behalf of the beneficiary under a durable power of attorney.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 5502 and inserting the following:

“5502. Appointment of fiduciaries.”.

(b) SUPERVISION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 5502, as amended by subsection (a)(1), the following new section:

“§ 5502A. Supervision of fiduciaries

“(a) COMMISSION.—(1)(A) In a case in which the Secretary determines that a commission is necessary in order to obtain the services of a fiduciary in the best interests of a beneficiary, the Secretary may authorize a fiduciary appointed by the Secretary to obtain from the monthly benefits provided to the beneficiary a reasonable commission for fiduciary services rendered, but the commission for any month may not exceed the lesser of the following amounts:

“(i) The amount that equals three percent of the monthly monetary benefits under laws administered by the Secretary paid on behalf of the beneficiary to the fiduciary.

“(ii) \$35.

“(B) A commission paid under this paragraph may not be derived from any award to a beneficiary regarding back pay or retroactive benefits payments.

“(C) A commission may not be authorized for a fiduciary who receives any other form of remuneration or payment in connection with rendering fiduciary services for benefits under this title on behalf of the beneficiary.

“(D) In accordance with section 6106 of this title, a commission may not be paid to a fiduciary if the Secretary determines that the fiduciary misused any benefit payments of a beneficiary.

“(E) If the Secretary determines that the fiduciary has misused any benefit or payments of a beneficiary, the Secretary may revoke the fiduciary status of the fiduciary.

“(2) Where, in the opinion of the Secretary, any fiduciary receiving funds on behalf of a Department beneficiary is acting in such a number of cases as to make it impracticable to conserve properly the estates or to supervise the persons of the beneficiaries, the Secretary may refuse to make future payments in such cases as the Secretary may deem proper.

“(b) COURT.—Whenever it appears that any fiduciary, in the opinion of the Secretary, is not properly executing or has not properly executed the duties of the trust of such fiduciary or has collected or paid, or is attempting to collect or pay, fees, commissions, or allowances that are inequitable or in excess of those allowed by law for the duties performed or expenses incurred, or has failed to make such payments as may be necessary for the benefit of the ward or the dependents of the ward, then the Secretary may appear, by the Secretary's authorized attorney, in the court which has appointed such fiduciary, or in any court having original, concurrent, or appellate jurisdiction over said cause, and make proper presentation of such matters. The Secretary, in the Secretary's discretion, may suspend payments to any such fiduciary who shall neglect or refuse, after reasonable notice, to render an account to the Secretary from time to time showing the application of such payments for the benefit of such incompetent or minor beneficiary, or who shall neglect or refuse to administer the estate according to law. The Secretary may require the fiduciary, as part of such account, to disclose any additional financial information concerning the beneficiary (except for information that is not available to the fiduciary). The Secretary may appear or intervene by the Secretary's duly authorized at-

torney in any court as an interested party in any litigation instituted by the Secretary or otherwise, directly affecting money paid to such fiduciary under this section.

“(c) PAYMENT OF CERTAIN EXPENSES.—Authority is hereby granted for the payment of any court or other expenses incident to any investigation or court proceeding for the appointment of any fiduciary or other person for the purpose of payment of benefits payable under laws administered by the Secretary or the removal of such fiduciary and appointment of another, and of expenses in connection with the administration of such benefits by such fiduciaries, or in connection with any other court proceeding hereby authorized, when such payment is authorized by the Secretary.

“(d) TEMPORARY PAYMENT OF BENEFITS.—All or any part of any benefits the payment of which is suspended or withheld under this section may, in the discretion of the Secretary, be paid temporarily to the person having custody and control of the incompetent or minor beneficiary, to be used solely for the benefit of such beneficiary, or, in the case of an incompetent veteran, may be apportioned to the dependent or dependents, if any, of such veteran. Any part not so paid and any funds of a mentally incompetent or insane veteran not paid to the chief officer of the institution in which such veteran is a patient nor apportioned to the veteran's dependent or dependents may be ordered held in the Treasury to the credit of such beneficiary. All funds so held shall be disbursed under the order and in the discretion of the Secretary for the benefit of such beneficiary or the beneficiary's dependents. Any balance remaining in such fund to the credit of any beneficiary may be paid to the beneficiary if the beneficiary recovers and is found competent, or if a minor, attains majority, or otherwise to the beneficiary's fiduciary, or, in the event of the beneficiary's death, to the beneficiary's personal representative, except as otherwise provided by law; however, payment will not be made to the beneficiary's personal representative if, under the law of the beneficiary's last legal residence, the beneficiary's estate would escheat to the State. In the event of the death of a mentally incompetent or insane veteran, all gratuitous benefits under laws administered by the Secretary deposited before or after August 7, 1959, in the personal funds of patients trust fund on account of such veteran shall not be paid to the personal representative of such veteran, but shall be paid to the following persons living at the time of settlement, and in the order named: The surviving spouse, the children (without regard to age or marital status) in equal parts, and the dependent parents of such veteran, in equal parts. If any balance remains, such balance shall be deposited to the credit of the applicable current appropriation; except that there may be paid only so much of such balance as may be necessary to reimburse a person (other than a political subdivision of the United States) who bore the expenses of last sickness or burial of the veteran for such expenses. No payment shall be made under the two preceding sentences of this subsection unless claim therefor is filed with the Secretary within five years after the death of the veteran, except that, if any person so entitled under said two sentences is under legal disability at the time of death of the veteran, such five-year period of limitation shall run from the termination or removal of the legal disability.

“(e) ESCHEATMENT.—Any funds in the hands of a fiduciary appointed by a State court or the Secretary derived from benefits payable under laws administered by the Secretary, which under the law of the State

wherein the beneficiary had last legal residence would escheat to the State, shall escheat to the United States and shall be returned by such fiduciary, or by the personal representative of the deceased beneficiary, less legal expenses of any administration necessary to determine that an escheat is in order, to the Department, and shall be deposited to the credit of the applicable revolving fund, trust fund, or appropriation.

“(f) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide to a fiduciary appointed under section 5502 of this title materials and tools to assist the fiduciary in carrying out the responsibilities of the fiduciary under this chapter, including—

“(1) handbooks, brochures, or other written material that explain the responsibilities of a fiduciary under this chapter;

“(2) tools located on an Internet website, including forms to submit to the Secretary required information; and

“(3) assistance provided by telephone.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5502 the following new item:

“5502A. Supervision of fiduciaries.”.

(c) DEFINITION OF FIDUCIARY.—Section 5506 of title 38, United States Code is amended—

(1) by striking “For purposes” and inserting “(a) For purposes”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(b)(1) For purposes of subsection (a), the term ‘person’ includes any—

“(A) State or local government agency whose mission is to carry out income maintenance, social service, or health care-related activities;

“(B) any State or local government agency with fiduciary responsibilities; or

“(C) any nonprofit social service agency that the Secretary determines—

“(i) regularly provides services as a fiduciary concurrently to five or more individuals; and

“(ii) is not a creditor of any such individual.

“(2) The Secretary shall maintain a list of State or local agencies and nonprofit social service agencies under paragraph (1) that are qualified to act as a fiduciary under this chapter. In maintaining such list, the Secretary may consult the lists maintained under section 807(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1007(h)).”.

(d) QUALIFICATIONS.—Section 5507 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 5507. Inquiry, investigations, and qualifications of fiduciaries

“(a) INVESTIGATION.—Any certification of a person for payment of benefits of a beneficiary to that person as such beneficiary’s fiduciary under section 5502 of this title shall be made on the basis of—

“(1) an inquiry or investigation by the Secretary of the fitness of that person to serve as fiduciary for that beneficiary to be conducted in advance of such certification and in accordance with subsection (b);

“(2) adequate evidence that certification of that person as fiduciary for that beneficiary is in the interest of such beneficiary (as determined by the Secretary under regulations);

“(3) adequate evidence that the person to serve as fiduciary protects the private information of a beneficiary in accordance with subsection (d)(1); and

“(4) the furnishing of any bond that may be required by the Secretary in accordance with subsection (f).

“(b) ELEMENTS OF INVESTIGATION.—(1) In conducting an inquiry or investigation of a

proposed fiduciary under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall conduct—

“(A) a face-to-face interview with the proposed fiduciary by not later than 30 days after the date on which such inquiry or investigation begins; and

“(B) a background check of the proposed fiduciary to—

“(i) in accordance with paragraph (2), determine whether the proposed fiduciary has been convicted of a crime; and

“(ii) determine whether the proposed fiduciary will serve the best interest of the beneficiary, including by conducting a credit check of the proposed fiduciary and checking the records under paragraph (5).

“(2) The Secretary shall request information concerning whether that person has been convicted of any offense under Federal or State law. If that person has been convicted of such an offense, the Secretary may certify the person as a fiduciary only if the Secretary finds that the person is an appropriate person to act as fiduciary for the beneficiary concerned under the circumstances.

“(3) The Secretary shall conduct the background check described in paragraph (1)(B)—

“(A) each time a person is proposed to be a fiduciary, regardless of whether the person is serving or has served as a fiduciary; and

“(B) at no expense to the beneficiary.

“(4) Each proposed fiduciary shall disclose to the Secretary the number of beneficiaries that the fiduciary acts on behalf of.

“(5) The Secretary shall maintain records of any person who has—

“(A) previously served as a fiduciary; and

“(B) had such fiduciary status revoked by the Secretary.

“(6)(A) If a fiduciary appointed by the Secretary is convicted of a crime described in subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall notify the beneficiary of such conviction by not later than 14 days after the date on which the Secretary learns of such conviction.

“(B) A crime described in this subparagraph is a crime—

“(i) for which the fiduciary is convicted while serving as a fiduciary for any person;

“(ii) that is not included in a report submitted by the fiduciary under section 5509(a) of this title; and

“(iii) that the Secretary determines could affect the ability of the fiduciary to act on behalf of the beneficiary.

“(c) INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN PERSONS.—

(1) In the case of a proposed fiduciary described in paragraph (2), the Secretary, in conducting an inquiry or investigation under subsection (a)(1), may carry out such inquiry or investigation on an expedited basis that may include giving priority to conducting such inquiry or investigation. Any such inquiry or investigation carried out on such an expedited basis shall be carried out under regulations prescribed for purposes of this section.

“(2) Paragraph (1) applies with respect to a proposed fiduciary who is—

“(A) the parent (natural, adopted, or step-parent) of a beneficiary who is a minor;

“(B) the spouse or parent of an incompetent beneficiary;

“(C) a person who has been appointed a fiduciary of the beneficiary by a court of competent jurisdiction;

“(D) being appointed to manage an estate where the annual amount of veterans benefits to be managed by the proposed fiduciary does not exceed \$3,600, as adjusted pursuant to section 5312 of this title; or

“(E) a person who is authorized to act on behalf of the beneficiary under a durable power of attorney.

“(d) PROTECTION OF PRIVATE INFORMATION.—(1) A fiduciary shall take all reasonable precautions to—

“(A) protect the private information of a beneficiary, including personally identifiable information; and

“(B) securely conducts financial transactions.

“(2) A fiduciary shall notify the Secretary of any action of the fiduciary that compromises or potentially compromises the private information of a beneficiary.

“(e) POTENTIAL MISUSE OF FUNDS.—(1) If the Secretary has reason to believe that a fiduciary may be misusing all or part of the benefit of a beneficiary, the Secretary shall—

“(A) conduct a thorough investigation to determine the veracity of such belief; and

“(B) if such veracity is established, transmit to the officials described in paragraph (2) a report of such investigation.

“(2) The officials described in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) The Attorney General.

“(B) Each head of a Federal department or agency that pays to a fiduciary or other person benefits under any law administered by such department of agency for the use and benefit of a minor, incompetent, or other beneficiary.

“(f) BOND.—In determining whether a proposed fiduciary is required to furnish a bond under subsection (a)(4), the Secretary shall consider—

“(1) the existence of any familial or other personal relationship between the proposed fiduciary and the beneficiary; and

“(2) the care the proposed fiduciary has taken to protect the interests of the beneficiary.

“(g) LIST OF FIDUCIARIES.—Each regional office of the Veterans Benefits Administration shall maintain a list of the following:

“(1) The name and contact information of each fiduciary, including address, telephone number, and email address.

“(2) With respect to each fiduciary described in paragraph (1)—

“(A) the date of the most recent background check and credit check performed by the Secretary under this section;

“(B) the date that any bond was paid under this section;

“(C) the name, address, and telephone number of each beneficiary the fiduciary acts on behalf of; and

“(D) the amount that the fiduciary controls with respect to each beneficiary described in subparagraph (C).”.

(e) ANNUAL RECEIPT OF PAYMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 5509 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking “may require a fiduciary to file a” and inserting “shall require a fiduciary to file an annual”; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The Secretary shall transmit such annual report or accounting to the beneficiary and any legal guardian of such beneficiary.”;

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

“(c) MATTERS INCLUDED.—Except as provided by subsection (f), an annual report or accounting under subsection (a) shall include the following:

“(1) For each beneficiary that a fiduciary acts on behalf of—

“(A) the amount of the benefits of the beneficiary provided under any law administered by the Secretary accrued during the year, the amount spent, and the amount remaining; and

“(B) if the fiduciary serves the beneficiary with respect to benefits not administered by the Secretary, an accounting of all sources of benefits or other income the fiduciary oversees for the beneficiary.

“(2) A list of events that occurred during the year covered by the report that could affect the ability of the fiduciary to act on behalf of the beneficiary, including—

“(A) the fiduciary being convicted of any crime;

“(B) the fiduciary declaring bankruptcy; and

“(C) any judgments entered against the fiduciary.

“(d) **RANDOM AUDITS.**—The Secretary shall annually conduct random audits of fiduciaries who receive a commission pursuant to subsection 5502A(a)(1) of this title.

“(e) **STATUS OF FIDUCIARY.**—If a fiduciary includes in the annual report events described in subsection (c)(2), the Secretary may take appropriate action to adjust the status of the fiduciary as the Secretary determines appropriate, including by revoking the fiduciary status of the fiduciary.

“(f) **CAREGIVERS AND CERTAIN OTHER FIDUCIARIES.**—(1)(A) In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall ensure that a caregiver fiduciary is required only to file an annual report or accounting under subsection (a) with respect to the amount of the benefits of the beneficiary provided under any law administered by the Secretary—

“(i) spent on—

“(I) food and housing for the beneficiary; and

“(II) clothing, health-related expenses, recreation, and other personal items for the beneficiary; and

“(ii) saved for the beneficiary.

“(B) The Secretary shall coordinate with the Under Secretary for Benefits and the Under Secretary for Health to—

“(i) minimize the frequency with which employees of the Department visit the home of a caregiver fiduciary and beneficiary; and

“(ii) limit the extent of supervision by such Under Secretaries with respect to such a fiduciary and beneficiary.

“(C) In this paragraph, the term ‘caregiver fiduciary’ means a fiduciary who—

“(i) in addition to acting as a fiduciary for a beneficiary, is approved by the Secretary to be a provider of personal care services for the beneficiary under paragraph (3)(A)(i) of section 1720G(a) of this title;

“(ii) in carrying out such care services to such beneficiary, has undergone not less than four home visits under paragraph (9)(A) of such section; and

“(iii) has not been required by the Secretary to take corrective action pursuant to paragraph (9)(C) of such section.

“(2) In carrying out this section, the Secretary may adjust the matters required under an annual report or accounting under subsection (a) with respect to a fiduciary whom the Secretary determines to have effectively protected the interests of the beneficiary over a sustained period.”; and

(C) by striking the section heading and inserting the following: “**Annual reports and accountings of fiduciaries**”.

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 55 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 5509 and inserting the following new item:

“5509. Annual reports and accountings of fiduciaries.”.

(f) **REPAYMENT OF MISUSED BENEFITS.**—Section 6107(a)(2)(C) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting before the period the following: “, including by the Secretary not acting in accordance with section 5507 of this title”.

(g) **ANNUAL REPORTS.**—Section 5510 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “The Secretary shall include in the Annual Benefits Report of the Veterans Benefits Administration or the Secretary’s Annual Performance and Accountability Re-

port” and inserting “Not later than July 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a separate report containing”.

(h) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a comprehensive report on the implementation of the amendments made by this Act, including—

(1) detailed information on the establishment of new policies and procedures pursuant to such amendments and training provided on such policies and procedures; and

(2) a discussion of whether the Secretary should provide fiduciaries with standardized financial software to simplify reporting requirements.

SEC. 5. LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND BONUSES TO EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

For each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not pay more than \$345,000,000 in awards or bonuses under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other awards or bonuses authorized under such title.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 1405, as amended.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to commend the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) for identifying another step in cleaning up the claims process. Her bill also includes provisions authored by the former sergeant major of the Minnesota National Guard, Mr. WALZ, to provide honorary veteran status to members of the National Guard and Reserves.

H.R. 1405 would also improve access to veterans’ claims information by certain State and local government officials. And finally, the bill would revise the process by which fiduciary agents are assigned and limit the amount of bonuses that can be paid under chapters 45 and 53 of title V.

Again, I know that there are other Members who wish to speak in more detail on the provisions of this bill, so at this time, I will reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1405, as amended.

I introduced this legislation, H.R. 1405, to improve the veterans’ claims appeals process. Currently, a veteran

must first exercise his or her appeal rights before the appeal process formally begins and the VA sends the required forms.

H.R. 1405, as amended, requires the VA to include an appeals form with the notice of decision for every claim. This cuts out several steps and speeds up the appeals process. This commonsense change will immediately reduce the time frame of the appeals process by 60 days.

H.R. 1405 will also allow the VA to provide better customer service to those veterans who are already struggling with significant delays and bureaucratic challenges.

This legislation is, indeed, a commonsense improvement that will result in veterans in southern Nevada receiving the benefits they have earned in a timely fashion. I constantly hear from veterans in Las Vegas that the process is too complicated and takes too long. This change will eliminate an unnecessary bureaucratic step and speed up the process for those veterans and all our veterans across the country.

H.R. 1405, as amended, is supported by the VA and the veterans service organizations who came and testified.

This piece of legislation also includes language from three other bills: H.R. 679, the Honor America’s Guard-Reserve Retirees Act, introduced by Representative WALZ of Minnesota; Chairman RUNYAN’s bill, H.R. 733, the Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act; and Mr. JOHNSON’s bill, H.R. 894, to reform VA’s fiduciary program.

I want to thank the chairman of our subcommittee, Mr. RUNYAN, for moving this legislation through the subcommittee and for the bipartisan cooperation that guides our work on behalf of Nevada’s veterans.

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I also want to thank the many veteran service organizations for their helpful input and for supporting this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 1405, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), the subcommittee chairman for Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Mr. RUNYAN. Thank you, Chairman MILLER, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have sponsored H.R. 733, the Access to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act, with my good friend and colleague, Mr. TIM WALZ of Minnesota. This legislation is included as section 3 of H.R. 1405 and would provide certain local and State government employees access to case-tracking information through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

There is no doubt that we have a responsibility to veterans to ensure that every effort is made to simplify the claims process. Key to this effort are the County Service Veterans Officers, whose expertise in claims development

helps veterans in New Jersey and in communities all across America.

Veterans are often frustrated, as they ask for help from a county service officer, that this person acting on their behalf cannot directly access even the most basic information about the status of their claim. However, while looking to remedy that complication and broaden access to case-tracking information, consideration must also be given to the protection of veterans' private information. That is the balance that this bill strikes.

Mr. Speaker, I support section 3 of H.R. 1405, along with all the other provisions contained within the bill, and I encourage all Members to join me in support of the legislation.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), who brings incredible expertise and compassion to the committee as a decorated veteran himself.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the full committee and the subcommittees for doing exceptional work, for putting our veterans first, for bringing a package of commonsense legislation to honor our Nation's veterans, and doing it in the best and smartest manner we can. If the entire Congress functioned like the VA Committee, I think the American public would be far better served.

There is a provision in this bill that is very simple. It recognizes the service and sacrifice of members of the National Guard and Reserves. These are the men and women of our Reserve component. They take the same oath of office. They do the same training. They and their family sacrifice their time and energy and stand at the ready at all times. They assist flood victims in Colorado and Minnesota, fight fires across the Western United States, and stand ready to fight and defend this Nation at a moment's notice. They truly are the minutemen.

I would guess that the vast majority of Americans and maybe even Members of this body don't recognize that you can serve 20 years doing that, and if you are not called to a specific title X service, you cannot be considered a veteran. You can go to the VA hospital, you can go use the GI Bill, you can be buried in a veterans' cemetery, but you are technically a military retiree.

This may seem like a small thing, but it is not. The title of "veteran" means more than just a license plate you get from your State. It is something your neighbors know about. These people don't and should not have to explain that they are technically not a veteran.

This piece of legislation—and I thank, again, the people who made this possible—simply corrects that. Very seldom do we get a chance to do this. It doesn't add any cost, and it does the right thing. So it is not an added benefit—which was earned, by the way. It simply corrects this, puts it in line,

and honors. If you serve 20 or more years in uniform, you stand ready, you train people who went to war, we are going to give you the dignity and the honor of calling you a veteran.

So I ask my colleagues to support this important package of legislation. This one small piece is the right thing to do. It is many, many years overdue. I ask for the support of H.R. 1405.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON), a former member of the VA Committee and a 26-plus year veteran of the United States Air Force.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. I thank the chairman for recognizing me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of H.R. 1405, which, in addition to improving the disability claims appeals process for veterans, contains language from H.R. 894, legislation I introduced to provide necessary reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Fiduciary Program.

In response to an investigation by the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, which I chaired in the last Congress, this legislation includes significant changes that will strengthen the VA's standards for administering the Fiduciary Program and increase protection for vulnerable veterans.

Requiring background checks and lowering the fee a fiduciary can charge would increase scrutiny over fiduciaries and help root out potential predators. It also adds a layer of protection for veterans with fiduciaries by allowing veterans to petition to have their fiduciary removed and replaced. Importantly, it would also enable veterans to appeal their incompetency status at any time. That is a right not currently granted to veterans.

I would like to thank Chairman RUNYAN and Ranking Member TITUS of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee for their support of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join us in support of H.R. 1405, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1405, as amended, is yet another bipartisan bill that has been advanced out of our committee. I, again, thank all the members for their collaborative work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 1405, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1405. This straightforward legislation contains several provisions relating to veterans benefits, and also includes a cut in bonuses at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Under current practice, the VA pays out about \$400 million in bonuses to its workers each year. Recently we have seen these bonuses too often go to people whose work does not merit a reward, and to the contrary, may even merit reprimand.

This practice has been evident at the Atlanta VA Medical Center, where despite the

fact that four unexpected deaths were attributed to mismanagement and lack of oversight, tens of thousands of dollars in bonuses were awarded to top level executives at the facility. It is past time that we stop rewarding people for simply showing up to work—bonuses should be the exception, not the norm. Furthermore, at a time when so many of our soldiers are returning from war, and in light of the deaths in Atlanta, I believe the VA should prioritize veterans' health and well-being above all else.

H.R. 1405 takes a positive step in ensuring that more discretion is used when providing bonus payments to employees at the VA. The legislation caps financial awards at the VA to no more than \$345 million for fiscal years 2014 to 2018. It is time we stop rewarding lackluster work and focus instead on providing the best possible care for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in showing our gratitude for our nation's veterans by supporting H.R. 1405.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1405, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include a notice of disagreement form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2011) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a two-year extension of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2011

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. TWO-YEAR EXTENSION OF VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting "31," after "30,"; and

(B) by striking "and the Persian Gulf War" and inserting "the Persian Gulf War, and the post-9/11 operations in Iraq and Afghanistan"; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking "December 31, 2013" and inserting "December 31, 2015".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 2011.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, having the right skills is one of the keys to finding a good job, and America's taxpayers are now providing the most valuable GI Bill benefit to veterans and dependents since World War II.

To assist VA and the Congress in making sure that veterans' educational assistance benefits are meeting the needs of our veterans, title 38 has established a committee to advise the Secretary on the needs of veteran students. The committee's statutory term will expire on December 31 of this year. H.R. 2011 would extend that term for 2 years. I thank Mr. DELANEY for bringing his bill forward to our committee.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013. The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the administration of education and training programs for veterans and servicemembers, Reservists and Guard personnel, and dependents of veterans. The Advisory Committee is composed of veterans and persons who are eminent in their respective fields of education, labor, and management and are representatives of institutions and establishments furnishing education to veterans.

Besides providing advice to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee recommends new educational benefits and services. It also plays a key role in the long-range planning and development of existing education benefit programs for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, as our post-9/11 GI Bill continues to evolve and be fully understood by the VA, colleges, veterans, and their dependents, the Advisory Committee is crucial to full implementation and resolving lingering issues. The authority for the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education is slated to end on December 31, 2013. H.R. 2011 would extend this authority for 2 years so that the Advisory Committee can continue its important work in ensuring that veterans receive the full value of their educational benefits.

I wish to thank Representative DELANEY of Maryland for introducing this bill and Chairman MILLER for bringing it to the floor today. I wish also to thank Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman FLORES and Ranking Member TAKANO for their hard work on this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the 16th District of Ohio (Mr. RENACCI).

Mr. RENACCI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today with many of my colleagues who worked together as part of a bipartisan working group, including Mr. CARNEY, Mr. HECK, Mr. DELANEY, and others, in strong support of H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act. It was my great pleasure to join my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY), in introducing this legislation.

America's veterans sacrifice dearly for this country, and I believe it is our obligation to help them once their service is complete.

The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education was created in 1972 to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on education and job training programs. Our legislation will not only continue the work of this valuable committee by reauthorizing it for 2 years, but it will also expand the committee to include representatives for those that served after September 11, 2001.

Every military conflict has its own unique atrocities and every generation of veterans faces a unique set of obstacles as they rejoin the civilian job market. For this reason, it is critical that we include members to represent those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As a Member of Congress, I believe there is no greater cause than protecting and caring for our service men and women. I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2011. Doing so will ensure that our troops receive the most effective education and training opportunities available.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY).

Mr. DELANEY. I want to thank the ranking member for yielding. I also want to thank Chairman MILLER and the rest of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for their support during this committee process.

The Veterans Affairs Committee does some of the most important work here in Congress and has long been applauded as a place where both parties work together. In that vein, our bill, H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act, is bipartisan legislation which I was pleased to introduce with my colleague from Ohio, Congressman RENACCI. H.R. 2011 is commonsense legislation designed to improve the VA's education

and job training programs, and I am proud that it is being considered on the House floor today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the real privileges of our work in Congress is getting to meet so many dedicated servicemen and veterans and learn about the incredible work they have done to keep our country safe and defend our way of life. Likewise, in our district work, one of the most essential services in our offices is to provide help to veterans so that they can earn the benefits that they deserve. When we travel across our districts, what we see is the deep appreciation the American people have for her veterans. There is a reverence for their heroism and gratitude for their service.

Mr. Speaker, the American people feel strongly that our veterans deserve to be repaid for their service. I believe that one of the most significant commitments that we can make to these servicemen is their education.

Going back to 1944, with the first GI Bill, we have joined together as a Nation and said that when our veterans come home, they are going to be able to receive the education they need. In today's high-tech global economy, that commitment is more important than ever. The veterans' unemployment rate is too low, especially for post-9/11.

To give our veterans the best chance to succeed, we need to make sure that they have a choice in the VA, we need to make sure that our current benefit programs are working, and we need to make sure that our veterans' education programs are adapting to an ever-changing world.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation does two very important things.

□ 1745

First, it reauthorizes the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education through 2015. Absent congressional action, the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education will sunset this December.

Second, this legislation updates the U.S. Code to ensure that the committee includes post-9/11 veterans. There are over 2 million post-9/11 veterans in the United States, and their perspectives need to be heard on the committee and at the VA.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to note that H.R. 2011 is supported by numerous important veterans organizations, including the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, the Student Veterans Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I can't think of better endorsements than these.

Helping our veterans transition to civilian life is one of the most critical challenges facing our country. These men and women are truly our country's heroes, and they deserve a world-class education. Our constituents feel strongly that this is something that we get right.

I thank the ranking member for his time, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. So if my good friend Mr. MICHAUD is ready to close, so am I.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2011, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I, too, Mr. Speaker, ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2011, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2011.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 2189, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2011, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

ESTABLISHING COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2189) to establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 404, nays 1, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 561]

YEAS—404

Amash	DeFazio	Huelskamp
Amodei	DeGette	Huffman
Andrews	Delaney	Huizenga (MI)
Bachmann	DeLauro	Hultgren
Bachus	DelBene	Hunter
Barber	Denham	Hurt
Barletta	Dent	Israel
Barr	DeSantis	Issa
Barrow (GA)	DesJarlais	Jackson Lee
Barton	Deutch	Jeffries
Bass	Diaz-Balart	Jenkins
Beatty	Dingell	Johnson (GA)
Becerra	Doggett	Johnson (OH)
Benish	Doyle	Johnson, E. B.
Bentivoglio	Duckworth	Johnson, Sam
Bera (CA)	Duffy	Jones
Bilirakis	Duncan (SC)	Jordan
Bishop (GA)	Duncan (TN)	Joyce
Bishop (NY)	Edwards	Kaptur
Bishop (UT)	Ellison	Keating
Black	Ellmers	Kelly (IL)
Blackburn	Engel	Kelly (PA)
Blumenauer	Enyart	Kennedy
Bonamici	Eshoo	Kildee
Boustany	Esty	Kilmer
Brady (PA)	Farenthold	King (IA)
Brady (TX)	Farr	King (NY)
Braley (IA)	Fattah	Kingston
Bridenstine	Fincher	Kinzinger (IL)
Brooks (AL)	Fitzpatrick	Kirkpatrick
Brooks (IN)	Fleischmann	Kline
Broun (GA)	Fleming	Kuster
Brown (FL)	Flores	Labrador
Brownley (CA)	Forbes	LaMalfa
Buchanan	Fortenberry	Lamborn
Bucshon	Foster	Lance
Burgess	Fox	Langevin
Bustos	Frankel (FL)	Lankford
Calvert	Franks (AZ)	Larsen (WA)
Camp	Frelinghuysen	Larson (CT)
Cantor	Fudge	Latham
Capito	Gabbard	Latta
Capps	Gallo	Lee (CA)
Capuano	Garamendi	Levin
Cárdenas	Garcia	Lewis
Carney	Gardner	Lipinski
Carson (IN)	Garrett	LoBiondo
Carter	Gerlach	Loeb
Cartwright	Gibbs	Lofgren
Cassidy	Gibson	Long
Castor (FL)	Gingrey (GA)	Lowenthal
Castro (TX)	Gohmert	Lowey
Chabot	Goodlatte	Lucas
Chaffetz	Gosar	Luetkemeyer
Chu	Gowdy	Lujan Grisham
Cicilline	Granger	(NM)
Clarke	Graves (GA)	Luján, Ben Ray
Clay	Grayson	(NM)
Cleaver	Green, Al	Lummis
Clyburn	Green, Gene	Lynch
Coble	Griffin (AR)	Maffei
Coffman	Griffith (VA)	Maloney,
Cohen	Guthrie	Carolyn
Cole	Hahn	Maloney, Sean
Collins (GA)	Hall	Marchant
Collins (NY)	Hanabusa	Marino
Conaway	Hanna	Massie
Conyers	Harper	Matheson
Cook	Harris	Matsui
Costa	Hartzler	McCarthy (CA)
Cotton	Hastings (FL)	McClintock
Courtney	Hastings (WA)	McCollum
Cramer	Heck (NV)	McDermott
Crawford	Heck (WA)	McGovern
Crenshaw	Hensarling	McHenry
Crowley	Himes	McIntyre
Cuellar	Hinojosa	McKeon
Culberson	Holding	McKinley
Cummings	Holt	McMorris
Daines	Honda	Rodgers
Davis (CA)	Horsford	McNerney
Davis, Danny	Hoyer	Meadows
Davis, Rodney	Hudson	Meehan

Meeks	Ribble	Smith (WA)
Meng	Rice (SC)	Southerland
Messer	Richmond	Stewart
Mica	Rigell	Stivers
Michaud	Roby	Stockman
Miller (FL)	Roe (TN)	Swalwell (CA)
Miller (MI)	Rogers (AL)	Takano
Miller, Gary	Rogers (KY)	Terrill
Miller, George	Rogers (MI)	Thompson (CA)
Moore	Rohrabacher	Thompson (MS)
Mullin	Rokita	Thompson (PA)
Mulvaney	Rooney	Thornberry
Murphy (FL)	Ros-Lehtinen	Tiberi
Murphy (PA)	Roskam	Tierney
Nadler	Ross	Tipton
Napolitano	Rothfus	Titus
Neal	Roybal-Allard	Tonko
Negrete McLeod	Royce	Tsongas
Neugebauer	Ruiz	Turner
Nolan	Runyan	Upton
Nugent	Ruppersberger	Valadao
Nunes	Ryan (OH)	Van Hollen
Nunnelee	Ryan (WI)	Vargas
O'Rourke	Salmon	Veasey
Olson	Sánchez, Linda	Vela
Palazzo	T.	Velázquez
Pallone	Sanchez, Loretta	Visclosky
Pascarella	Sarbanes	Wagner
Paulsen	Scalise	Walberg
Pearce	Schakowsky	Walden
Pelosi	Schiff	Walorski
Perlmutter	Schneider	Walz
Perry	Schock	Wasserman
Peters (CA)	Schrader	Schultz
Peters (MI)	Schweikert	Waters
Peterson	Scott (VA)	Watt
Petri	Scott, Austin	Waxman
Pingree (ME)	Scott, David	Weber (TX)
Pittenger	Sensenbrenner	Webster (FL)
Pitts	Serrano	Welch
Pocan	Sessions	Westerman
Poe (TX)	Sewell (AL)	Whitfield
Polis	Shea-Porter	Williams
Pompeo	Sherman	Wilson (SC)
Posey	Shimkus	Wittman
Price (GA)	Shuster	Wolf
Price (NC)	Simpson	Womack
Quigley	Sinema	Woodall
Radel	Sires	Yarmuth
Rahall	Slaughter	Yoder
Rangel	Smith (MO)	Yoho
Reed	Smith (NE)	Young (IN)
Reichert	Smith (NJ)	
Renacci	Smith (TX)	

NAYS—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—25

Aderholt	Herrera Beutler	Payne
Butterfield	Higgins	Rush
Campbell	Kind	Schwartz
Connolly	McCarthy (NY)	Speier
Cooper	McCaul	Stutzman
Graves (MO)	Moran	Wilson (FL)
Grijalva	Noem	Young (AK)
Grimm	Owens	
Gutiérrez	Pastor (AZ)	

□ 1854

Messrs. ROHRABACHER and BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “A bill to improve the processing of disability claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 2011) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a two-year extension of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 404, nays 2, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 562]

YEAS—404

Amash	Culberson	Hastings (WA)
Amodi	Cummings	Heck (NV)
Andrews	Daines	Heck (WA)
Bachmann	Davis (CA)	Hensarling
Bachus	Davis, Danny	Himes
Barber	Davis, Rodney	Hinojosa
Barletta	DeFazio	Holding
Barr	DeGette	Holt
Barrow (GA)	Delaney	Honda
Barton	DeLauro	Horsford
Bass	DelBene	Hoyer
Beatty	Denham	Hudson
Becerra	Dent	Huelskamp
Benishek	DeSantis	Huffman
Bentivolio	DesJarlais	Huizenga (MI)
Bera (CA)	Deutch	Hultgren
Bilirakis	Diaz-Balart	Hunter
Bishop (GA)	Dingell	Hurt
Bishop (NY)	Doggett	Israel
Bishop (UT)	Doyle	Issa
Black	Duckworth	Jackson Lee
Blackburn	Duffy	Jeffries
Blumenauer	Duncan (SC)	Jenkins
Bonamici	Duncan (TN)	Johnson (GA)
Boustany	Edwards	Johnson (OH)
Brady (PA)	Ellison	Johnson, E. B.
Brady (TX)	Elmers	Johnson, Sam
Braley (IA)	Engel	Jones
Bridenstine	Enyart	Jordan
Brooks (AL)	Eshoo	Joyce
Brooks (IN)	Esty	Kaptur
Broun (GA)	Farenthold	Keating
Brown (FL)	Farr	Kelly (IL)
Brownley (CA)	Fattah	Kelly (PA)
Buchanan	Fincher	Kennedy
Bucshon	Fitzpatrick	Kildee
Burgess	Fleischmann	Kilmer
Bustos	Fleming	King (IA)
Calvert	Flores	King (NY)
Camp	Forbes	Kingston
Cantor	Fortenberry	Kinzinger (IL)
Capito	Foster	Kirkpatrick
Capps	Fox	Kline
Capuano	Frankel (FL)	Kuster
Cárdenas	Franks (AZ)	Labrador
Carney	Frelinghuysen	LaMalfa
Carson (IN)	Fudge	Lamborn
Carter	Gabbard	Lance
Cartwright	Galleo	Langevin
Cassidy	Garamendi	Lankford
Castor (FL)	Garcia	Larsen (WA)
Castro (TX)	Gardner	Larson (CT)
Chabot	Garrett	Latham
Chaffetz	Gerlach	Latta
Chu	Gibbs	Lee (CA)
Cicilline	Gibson	Levin
Clarke	Gingrey (GA)	Lewis
Clay	Gohmert	Lipinski
Cleaver	Goodlatte	LoBiondo
Clyburn	Gosar	Loeb
Coble	Gowdy	Lofgren
Coffman	Granger	Long
Cohen	Graves (GA)	Lowenthal
Cole	Grayson	Lowe
Collins (GA)	Green, Al	Lucas
Collins (NY)	Green, Gene	Luetkemeyer
Conaway	Griffin (AR)	Lujan Grisham
Conyers	Griffith (VA)	(NM)
Cook	Guthrie	Lujan, Ben Ray
Costa	Hahn	(NM)
Cotton	Hall	Lummis
Courtney	Hanabusa	Lynch
Cramer	Hanna	Maffei
Crawford	Harper	Maloney
Crenshaw	Harris	Carolyn
Crowley	Hartzler	Maloney, Sean
Cuellar	Hastings (FL)	Marchant

Marino	Pompeo	Slaughter
Matheson	Posey	Smith (MO)
Matsui	Price (GA)	Smith (NE)
McCarthy (CA)	Price (NC)	Smith (NJ)
McClintock	Quigley	Smith (TX)
McCollum	Radel	Smith (WA)
McDermott	Rahall	Southerland
McGovern	Rangel	Stewart
McHenry	Reed	Stivers
McIntyre	Reichert	Stockman
McKeon	Renacci	Swalwell (CA)
McKinley	Ribble	Takano
McMorris	Rice (SC)	Terry
Rodgers	Richmond	Thompson (CA)
McNerney	Rigell	Thompson (MS)
Meadows	Roby	Thompson (PA)
Meehan	Roe (TN)	Thornberry
Meeks	Rogers (AL)	Tiberi
Meng	Rogers (KY)	Tierney
Messer	Rogers (MI)	Tipton
Mica	Rohrabacher	Titus
Michaud	Rokita	Tonko
Miller (FL)	Rooney	Tsongas
Miller (MI)	Ros-Lehtinen	Turner
Miller, Gary	Roskam	Upton
Miller, George	Ross	Valadao
Moore	Rothfus	Van Hollen
Mullin	Roybal-Allard	Vargas
Mulvaney	Royce	Veasey
Murphy (FL)	Ruiz	Vela
Murphy (PA)	Runyan	Velázquez
Nadler	Ruppersberger	Visclosky
Napolitano	Ryan (OH)	Wagner
Neal	Ryan (WI)	Walberg
Negrete McLeod	Salmon	Walden
Neugebauer	Sánchez, Linda	Walorski
Nolan	T.	Walz
Nugent	Sanchez, Loretta	Wasserman
Nunes	Sanford	Schultz
Nunnelee	Sarbanes	Waters
O'Rourke	Scalise	Watt
Olson	Schakowsky	Waxman
Issa	Schiff	Weber (TX)
Pallone	Schneider	Webster (FL)
Pascarella	Schock	Welch
Paulsen	Schrader	Wenstrup
Pearce	Scott (VA)	Westmoreland
Pelosi	Scott, Austin	Whitfield
Perlmutter	Scott, David	Williams
Perry	Sensenbrenner	Wilson (FL)
Peters (CA)	Serrano	Wilson (SC)
Peters (MI)	Sessions	Wittman
Peterson	Sewell (AL)	Wolf
Petri	Shea-Porter	Womack
Pingree (ME)	Sherman	Woodall
Pittenger	Shimkus	Yarmuth
Pitts	Shuster	Yoder
Pocan	Simpson	Yoho
Poe (TX)	Sinema	Young (IN)
Polis	Sires	

NAYS—2

Schweikert
NOT VOTING—24

Aderholt	Gutiérrez	Owens
Butterfield	Herrera Beutler	Pastor (AZ)
Campbell	Higgins	Payne
Connolly	Kind	Rush
Cooper	McCarthy (NY)	Schwartz
Graves (MO)	McCaul	Speier
Grijalva	Moran	Stutzman
Grimm	Noem	Young (AK)

□ 1903

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 992, SWAPS REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2374, RETAIL INVESTOR PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SESSIONS from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-253) on the resolution (H.

Res. 391) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 992) to amend provisions in section 716 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act relating to Federal assistance for swaps entities, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2374) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN HONOR OF CONGRESSMAN MAJOR R. OWENS

(Ms. CLARKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, we were all saddened last Monday evening to hear of the passing of my predecessor, the Honorable Congressman Major R. Owens, and I stand here with colleagues to commemorate his life and his record of dedicated service to the people of central Brooklyn.

Congressman Owens was committed to the children and families who had been marginalized and ignored by the body politic. He worked to involve the community in the control of local public schools in Brooklyn and was a strong advocate for education as a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. His efforts were critical to the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Congressman Owens had always been dedicated to expanding access to information and the empowerment of the citizenry. Before being elected to the New York State Senate, he was a proud librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library, and he remains the only librarian to have been a Member of Congress; and he was a mayoral appointee of Mayor John Lindsay as commissioner for the Community Development Agency, fighting on behalf of impoverished New York citizens.

Congressman Major Owens retired from elected office. He devoted himself to training the next generation of leaders. As a professor, he shared his experience with the students at Medgar Evers College.

Mr. Speaker, the example of Congressman Major R. Owens' public service will remain an inspiration to this and future generations of elected officials in Brooklyn and across the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House stand to offer a moment of silence in honor of the late Congressman Major R. Owens.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay homage and respect, to the life and legacy of Major Owens. Having been elected to the United States Congress in 1992, I got the grand opportunity to work alongside Major until his retirement in 2007. During this time, Major was a hardworking member and great person. He was resolute in

his desire to help others and improve the quality of life for his constituents.

Finding a career as librarian prior to coming to Congress in 1983, I can vividly remember how wise and articulate he was. Often times during a special order, Major would control the entire time speaking about issues impacting those in his district and the broader African American community.

While in Congress, Major was a champion for many issues. Among his greatest accomplishments was securing over \$100 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, helping pass the Americans with Disabilities Act, and consistently ensuring the voices of the disenfranchised did not go mute during his tenure.

My continued thoughts and prayers are with his wife, children, family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time. I pray that they find solace in knowing that Major lived a great life in which they and many others, can be proud of and inspired by.

A man who believed in God, provided for his family, and served his country. Major was the absolute epitome of what it is to be a model citizen.

There is an old gospel song that says . . . "May the works I've done speak for me." There is no doubt that the great things Major accomplished during his 24 years as a Member of Congress will surely speak for him. May his soul rest in peace and legacy forever live on.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable man, a twenty four year distinguished Member of this body and an outstanding American, Congressman Major Owens.

It was through his work in the community as a librarian, chief administrator of New York City's anti-poverty program and a State Senator where he learned the benevolence of kindness and value of public service.

In Congress, Congressman Owens worked tirelessly to improve education for all. His dedication to this cause extended further than the boundaries of our country and touched countless lives.

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon this body to acknowledge Congressman Owens service which has improved our Nation.

On behalf of the people of the 30th Congressional District of Texas and the United States Congress, I extend my heartfelt sympathy to his family and celebrate his life of service.

ACA RAISES COSTS ON YOUNG AND HEALTHY COVERAGE

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius is scheduled to testify before the House Energy and Commerce Committee on the massive technological failures of the online rollout of the Affordable Care Act; and while some of my colleagues would lead you to believe that these are only minor Web site glitches, I rise to address a more basic, fundamental flaw in the construct of the Affordable Care Act.

The structure of the design, admittedly by an MIT economist who helped create ObamaCare, was to increase rates for the young and healthy while decreasing rates for the elderly or sick. The problem is this only serves to deter young Americans from purchasing health care when faced with the costs of education, a first home, and the prospect of starting a family.

We all want Americans to be covered, but higher premiums for the young and healthy to subsidize those who are greater consumers of health care was not the bill of goods the American people were originally sold. Mr. Speaker, young Americans deserve better.

IMMIGRATION AND WOMEN

(Ms. DUCKWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, achieving immigration reform is not just an issue of security or economics; it is also an issue of women's rights. It is women who disproportionately bear the brunt of our inability to fix the immigration system. Undocumented women are more likely to suffer from domestic violence, poor work conditions, or be victims of human trafficking. They are afraid to demand justice for crimes that are committed against them, and they are afraid of retaliation and deportation.

A pathway to citizenship is critical to putting an end to a system that encourages the exploitation of women. Far too many mothers have been separated from their children because our immigration system does not value family unity and parental rights. Family values are American values. Women waiting decades to reunite with their families is not acceptable.

Ensuring that our family-based immigration policies are strong and that they come with rights to employment are key to promoting the well-being of women. We benefit as a Nation when women have the ability to reach their full potential. With the help of women, it is projected that comprehensive immigration reform will reduce our deficit by \$1 trillion over 10 years.

I know that my neighbors care about women's rights and care about keeping families together. That is why we need to pass comprehensive immigration reform now.

COMMEMORATING CHLI'S 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute, known as CHLI.

Through his vision and leadership, former Congressman Lincoln Diaz-

Balart has guided CHLI in its mission to advance our community's diversity of thought, while preparing young Hispanics to become the leaders of tomorrow.

CHLI's programs and initiatives focus on a wide variety of issues, from public service to commerce and technology. This month, I spoke at CHLI's Trade and International Affairs Symposium to highlight the importance of our community's contribution to the global economy. As the fastest growing group of both consumers and producers, Hispanics can benefit from reducing trade barriers and opening new markets.

CHLI has also helped many young people and provided them with the necessary tools to succeed in this increasingly globalized world. Through CHLI's Global Leaders Internship and Fellowship Program, students from across our Nation have expanded their professional horizons and enhanced their understanding of the public and private sectors.

As a CHLI board member, I am proud of the opportunities that CHLI provides to our youth and its commitment to ensuring that we continue to prosper as a Nation.

IN RECOGNITION OF YVONNE "BONNIE" GONZALEZ OF SOUTH TEXAS

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Yvonne "Bonnie" Gonzalez, an extraordinary public servant who has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of south Texas residents.

As CEO of Workforce Solutions, she has played a vitally important role in leading transformational change in the Rio Grande Valley and in the workforce industry. In fact, due to her exemplary leadership, Workforce Solutions has become one of the highest performing workforce boards in Texas.

Prior to joining Workforce Solutions as their CEO, Ms. Gonzalez served as founding president and CEO of the RGV Empowerment Zone Corporation. Under her direction, the Empowerment Zone took a \$40 million Federal investment and leveraged an additional \$416 million in local, State, national, and private sector investment into the Empowerment Zone communities.

As a devoted public servant, Ms. Gonzalez has inspired others to strive for excellence and to put the needs of our community first. Today I congratulate Ms. Bonnie Gonzalez on her new venture as president of the Knapp Community Care Foundation and thank her for the many years of public service to south Texas residents.

□ 1915

U.S. MONEY TO PAKISTAN IS
FOOLISH

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, Pakistan is a disloyal, deceptive, and devious ally of the United States. Pakistan harbors Taliban terrorists that are at war with our troops in Afghanistan. Pakistan hid out Osama bin Laden. Pakistan put the Pakistani doctor that helped the United States take out "the devil of the desert" in prison for 30 years.

Pakistan is playing the United States for a nation of fools. Otherwise, why would our Government just send \$1.2 billion to Pakistan? Haven't we learned that Pakistan takes our money and slyly and seditiously uses it for purposes counter to U.S. interests?

Pakistan has become the Benedict Arnold ally of America. Why do we pay Pakistan to hate us? Madam Speaker, they will do it for free.

No American taxpayer money to Pakistan. Use that American money in America. Freedom-loving nations that give Pakistan money in the delusive hope of fighting terrorism are sailing the ships of the foolish—and the United States has become the admiral of the fleet.

And that's just the way it is.

SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, oceans cover 70 percent of our Earth's surface. They are home to a vast number of organisms that form an intricate food web—one that the world has relied on for high-quality protein and steady employment for generations. If we continue on our current path, we will face a serious decline in these essential resources.

The oceans have been absorbing nearly one-fourth of the carbon emissions we release every day. We think of the oceans as too big to fail, but we are altering their physical, chemical, and biological characteristics at an increasing pace. Our oceans are warming, current patterns are changing, and salinity and acidity are changing. Sea levels are rising, and many fisheries are being overexploited.

It is long past time for us to address climate change—to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and manage our coastal waters and the oceans in a more sustainable way. Oceans have sustained life on this planet for thousands of years. We should act now to ensure that they continue to do so for thousands more.

REDUCING EMPLOYER BURDENS,
UNLEASHING INNOVATION, AND
LABOR DEVELOPMENT

(Mr. GUTHRIE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of manufacturing to our economy.

Today, I introduced the Reducing Employer Burdens, Unleashing Innovation, and Labor Development, or the REBUILD Act of 2013.

The REBUILD Act is aimed at stimulating domestic production and increasing our global competitiveness. Provisions included in the bill seek to redesign workforce training, achieve comprehensive tax reform, increase access to energy and decrease costly regulations, reform health care, reform trade policy, and open up more spectrum for technological innovation.

Pieced together, these policies will allow us to ensure the United States of America remains the best place in the world to do business. I come from a small business and manufacturing background and understand how Federal policies can encourage or stifle innovation and job creation. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in this effort to restore American innovation and boost our global competitiveness.

IN TRIBUTE TO MAJOR OWENS

(Mr. WATT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WATT. Madam Speaker, I simply wanted to rise and pay tribute to the memory of my dear friend and colleague, Major Owens, who passed last week. I express my condolences to his family.

As new Members, we take for granted sometimes that there is a system in place to provide support and mentorship to new Members. It is not just the way things operate.

When I came to Congress in 1993, Major Owens was already here. He became one of the monitors and advisers who taught me the rules of how this institution operates—the rules of civility, respect, and honor—and the rules by which we operate the floor of the House. I learned so much from him, and over the years became a good, close friend of Major Owens and the members of his family, all of whom we join in grieving with on this occasion.

I simply wanted to say how much I respected him and how much appreciation I had for the advice and mentorship he provided to me.

CONGRATULATING MARY GIBSON
SCOTT

(Mrs. LUMMIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LUMMIS. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Mary Gibson Scott,

the superintendent of Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway. She announced her retirement from the National Park Service this week after 33 years of public service.

Mary is one of just 10 top-level park managers in the United States and is also the only woman among them. Before taking her current position in Wyoming in 2004, Mary held park management positions across the U.S., including at fabulous Carlsbad Caverns, the Golden Gate Park, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the Channel Islands in the West, and in the East, the Gateway in New York and the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia.

Over the course of her career, Mary has earned a variety of awards, including the Department of the Interior Superior Service Award and the Inter-mountain Region's Superintendent of the Year for Natural Resources, just to name two.

To many of us in Wyoming, Madam Speaker, Mary Gibson Scott is a neighbor and a friend, immersed in the Wyoming community; a valued and treasured public servant; and the epitome of a leader in stewardship of both natural resources and human relationships. I am proud and pleased to call Mary Gibson Scott my friend.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mary Gibson Scott on her illustrious career and in wishing her the very best for a happy and well-earned retirement.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on Ms. CLARKE's 1-minute speech.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WAGNER). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR R. OWENS

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in celebrating "the people's Congressman." I am so delighted that we have the opportunity to share our friendship toward the late Congressman Major Owens, who loved his Brooklyn district and loved his family. My deepest sympathy goes to his wife Maria, and all of his family members.

Major Owens was truly someone who served the people.

I am reminded of a story that he told of when his family heard that FDR was providing opportunities for work in the 1940s. No one in his community was getting jobs, but his parents wrote to FDR, and all of a sudden things

changed. That is the kind of man Congressman Owens was.

He was a change-maker, educator, and librarian. He was always there to say that his district and America's poor people needed to be represented. He was, in fact, the people's Congressperson because he extended his hand. He loved the people. He provided resources and he fought the good fight.

I want to thank you, Congressman Major Owens, for being my friend and a friend of those in Congress, Republicans and Democrats. Most of all, I want to thank Congressman Major Owens for being the friend of poor people around the Nation who could not speak for themselves.

I am glad that his giant footsteps had a great impact on the congressional district he represented. More importantly, he had a great impact on America. He was a soldier on the battlefield for those who could not speak for themselves.

May he rest in peace. God bless him and his family.

Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a great American, a fighter for justice and equality, one of the most passionate advocates for educational opportunity, and a man who served in this body with distinction, Major R. Owens of New York. Congressman Owens died Monday, October 21, in Manhattan at the age of 77.

Major Owens was born June 28, 1936, in Collierville, Tennessee. He was educated at Morehouse College, from which he received his baccalaureate degree, and Atlanta University, from which he earned a Master of Science degree. Major Owens later moved to New York where he worked as a librarian before accepting an appointment from Mayor John V. Lindsay to serve as Director of the New York City Community Development Agency. He also served as a faculty member in the Department of Public Administration at Medgar Evers College.

In 1974, Major Owens was elected to the New York State Senate and was reelected to serve a second term in 1978. In 1982, Major Owens won a competitive primary to fill the seat of retiring Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to the House of Representatives and the first woman ever to seek the Democratic nomination for President of the United States.

As the Member of Congress for the 11th Congressional District of New York, Major Owens represented a diverse district and eclectic district centered in Brooklyn, and including low income areas of Brownsville and parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant, the large Hasidic community of Crown Heights, the heavily Caribbean areas of Flatbush and East Flatbush, and the more affluent neighborhoods Park Slope and Prospect Park.

Affectionately known as the "Education Congressman" by his constituents, Major Owens fought tirelessly throughout his twelve terms in Congress to protect and expand educational opportunity for all Americans, especially those from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds. As he often reminded his colleagues in the House, education was "the kingpin issue." In an article he published in *Black Issues in Higher Education*, he

wrote: "We have to believe that all power and progress really begins with education."

Major Owens served on the House Committee on Government Reform and the Committee on Education and the Workforce. As the Ranking Member on the Education and Workforce Subcommittee for Workforce Protections, Congressman Owens helped lead the fight for minimum wage increases, blocked the attempt to eliminate cash payments for overtime, fought against efforts to roll back or repeal Davis-Bacon and to weaken the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

As Chairman of the Education Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights (1988–94), Congresswoman Owens was one of the earliest and strongest supporters of the Americans With Disabilities Act, which was enacted into law in 1991. In recognition for his yeoman work to pass the ADA, Major Owens was awarded an honorary degree by Galludet University, the world's premier higher education institution serving deaf and hard of hearing people.

Major Owens loved serving in this body and he was a valued member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Black Caucus. As Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus Task Force on Haiti, he led the successful three-year fight which restored the democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Madam Speaker, Congressman Owens was a legislator's legislator. Our prayers and condolences go out to his wife Maria, his sons Chris, Geoff, and Milard; his grandchildren; and to all his friends and loved ones. Major Owens touched so many lives in so many helpful ways that he will always be remembered by people he served so ably and selflessly for more than thirty years.

Madam Speaker, a dear colleague has fallen. We are all saddened at the loss but overjoyed to have had the honor of serving with the distinguished gentleman from Brooklyn, New York, the honorable Major R. Owens.

FIGHTING AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and bring attention to the recent candlelight vigil held in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, honoring the 38 deaths from domestic violence this year.

The vigil, which was organized as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month by the local domestic abuse prevention nonprofit, Cornerstone, was held at Purgatory Creek Park earlier this month. There was an incredible showing of support by members of our community and local police departments and law enforcement for those that are affected by domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, this is an issue which affects families and communities all across our country, and we must do more to put an end to these horrible acts.

Earlier this year, I was proud to author a provision in the Violence Against Women Act to assist domestic

abuse victims in locating safe housing, which is a critical step on the path to recovery, but more work needs to be done to bring attention and an end to domestic violence in our neighborhoods.

REMEMBERING CONGRESSMAN MAJOR ROBERT ODELL OWENS

(Mr. AL GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, like my colleagues, I mourn the death of Major Owens, but I also want to celebrate his life. My purpose for rising tonight is to do just this: celebrate his life.

Major Owens was a person of character who had a great reputation. I had the honor of knowing him through my chief of staff, who was his chief of staff for 16 years. In working with her, she explained to me all of the many things that he was a party to over the course of the years, not only here in Congress, where he worked on legislation to help persons who had disabilities, but also back in his home district, where he was a person who championed the causes of people who were in need.

It means something to me to know that he has this great reputation, but it is equally as important for me to share with people that he did have character.

When I met with him to discuss the hiring of Jackie Ellis, my chief of staff, because she was working with him, and he was contemplating some other things and moving, he explained to me how important it was in this body to keep your word. He explained that, among your friends and your colleagues, your word is the thing that will give you the opportunity to continue to have support in the Congress of the United States of America. His words about character and integrity are still with me.

I suspect that because he was a teacher—and as you know, teachers impact eternity—I will pass on to others what he has done because he passed it on to me, and what his chief of staff caused me to learn vicariously from him will impact my office eternally.

I am grateful to him. I pay tribute to him. I want his family to know that he has been a blessing to me and to my staff and to the people I serve.

God bless you, and thank you, Major.

CONGRESSMAN MAJOR ROBERT ODELL OWENS

Born—June 28, 1936 (Collierville, TN).

Elected to Congress representing Brooklyn's 12th Congressional District from 1983–1992 (98th–102nd Congress).

After redistricting—Represented Brooklyn's 11th Congressional District from 1993–2006 (103rd–109th Congress).

Transitioned to Eternity—October 21, 2013 (Brooklyn, NY).

Father of five children.

First librarian elected to Congress.

Chaired the Brooklyn chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Past Commissioner of New York City's Community Development Agency.

Served on the Education and Labor Committee throughout his tenure in Congress (From 1987–1993 chaired the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights).

Served on the Government Reform Committee throughout his tenure in Congress.

Chaired the Congressional Black Caucus Higher Education Braintrust.

Floor manager and original co-sponsor of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Sponsor of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Authored legislation that prevented the Immigration and Naturalization Service from deporting the parents of American-born children under age 18 and legislation that extended citizenship to immigrant children under 12 who were in the U.S. without their parents.

Founder and organizer of the National Commission for African American Education.

Strong Organized Labor advocate—Championed the need for maintaining the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Lead sponsor of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act—Providing for major reforms in the Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Program (Programs designed to aid community agencies in combating urban and rural poverty).

Past chair of the CBC's Haitian Task Force.

Has written several books including: "Roots and Wings", a semi-autobiographical book about his life.

In 2006 was named a distinguished visiting scholar at the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, where he completed a case study of the CBC and its impact on national politics.

Prior to his death, Congressman Owens taught at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, NY.

OBAMACARE CHOICE ACT OF 2013

(Mr. BARTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to announce to my colleagues in the House that I just introduced H.R. 3348, the ObamaCare Choice Act of 2013.

This is a simple 1½-page bill. It simply lets the American people choose for the next year whether they want to participate in what we commonly call ObamaCare. If it is as good as the President says it is, people will join and get the benefits from it. If, on the other hand, they can't get the software fixed, the policy mandates are unsustainable, and the costs are too high, the American people will choose not to participate. It is a simple bill that makes participation voluntary by suspending the tax for nonparticipation.

So I would encourage all of my colleagues to join as a cosponsor of H.R. 3348, the ObamaCare Choice Act of 2013.

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REMEMBERING THE HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased tonight to lead a Special Order in memory of the life and service of our dear friend, our colleague from Florida, Mr. Bill Young. We will hear from members of the Florida delegation and also from leaders from the committee on which he was a leader, himself.

To lead off tonight in our Special Order in that vein, I am very pleased to yield first to the chair of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, on which Mr. Young served so distinguishably, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS).

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Let me thank my colleague from Florida for yielding me this time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today with a very heavy heart to honor the memory and service of our dear friend and colleague, Bill Young.

Bill served in this House and he served this country for decades with compassion and distinction. I have not known this institution without him—most of us are in that same situation—and I believe it will take a long time to fill the hole that his absence has left. As an appropriator, he was a role model for all of us. When I became chairman of the committee, I knew I had some very large shoes to fill in following in the footsteps of Chairman Young, among others. He fought with determination and enthusiasm to make this country a better place.

Bill was a champion for our troops and veterans especially, both in the Halls of the Congress and outside. His fierce determination and dedication to our troops and veterans never wavered. As we all know, he and his dear wife, Beverly, were to be found very frequently at Bethesda or at Walter Reed in the city or at a hospital overseas where troops were sick, and they spent hours and hours helping those who were injured.

He was, of course, the chairman of the Defense Subcommittee on the Appropriations Committee for many years. He also served on the Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, and his thumbprint is very visible in the improved medical care and in the quality of life of our troops, among the many other issues that he held dear to his heart.

Bill was a leader in this House who was able to make his mark with grace and fortitude. He was a lion about the things that he cared about; but he was a gentle lion, and he did things with grace and with a quiet voice until you crossed him on the betterment of our troops. Then Bill Young would let you know where to get off.

I will miss Bill Young greatly as I know all of us will. My prayers are with his family, with Beverly, with his many friends, and with all of those who had the privilege of knowing and working with Bill Young. He will be greatly missed.

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentleman.

We are also pleased to have with us tonight a distinguished leader of the Florida delegation and now the dean of the Florida delegation—our senior member—to pay tribute to Bill Young. I yield to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the time.

A good man, a warm friend and a true patriot, Bill Young was an example for all of us here in Congress, and it was an honor and a privilege to serve with him. Madam Speaker, the loss of Bill's experience and knowledge will be felt by everyone in this Chamber.

The consummate gentleman from Florida, Bill was always ready to listen to his colleagues on both sides of the aisle, greeting everyone with a smile. Both principled and honest while maintaining civility with his colleagues, Bill never allowed differences of opinion to devolve into partisan bickering, and he worked with Republicans and Democrats to balance our budget as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

A tenacious public servant, Bill dedicated his life to his constituents. His number one priority was ensuring those who serve our country get the help and the services they need to be successful. Improving the quality of life for veterans and for all Active Duty personnel, including those in the Reserve and the National Guard, was Bill's mission. Bill was always there for those returning from combat, visiting and helping our wounded warriors with his wife, Beverly, and providing for our veterans at the medical facility in Bay Pines, which now bears his name.

As chairman of the Appropriations National Defense Subcommittee, Bill oversaw spending by the Pentagon and worked to ensure the readiness of our military in combat. His efforts helped not just those in his district but Americans across the Nation. His legacy will be seen around every corner, from the beaches of Pinellas County to our fighting forces around the world.

A genuine statesman, Bill's accomplishments are as varied as they are numerous. He fought to protect Florida's environment by blocking drilling close to our gulf coast and in helping to restore eroding beaches. With Beverly, Bill helped create a national bone marrow registry with almost 10 million donors registered thus far. Just as he fought for his own district, he could always be counted upon to help us with our constituent needs.

In 1991, in his district, he saved MacDill Air Force Base from closure; and a year later, he helped rebuild and protect Homestead Air Reserve Base in

my congressional district after the devastation of Hurricane Andrew. Through his vital efforts in my district, the Miami River dredging project was completed—a project that continues to generate billions for the shipping industry, to create jobs and to spur economic growth in south Florida. It couldn't have happened without Bill Young. Bill was instrumental in assisting Tampa Bay residents and those in my south Florida community and, indeed, across our country.

A true gentleman, a public servant and a friend, Bill Young deserves all of our thanks, Madam Speaker. He will be forever remembered as a champion not just for Florida but, indeed, for our entire great Nation.

I thank the gentleman for arranging this Special Order.

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Young was respected not only by his Republican peers and colleagues but by peers on both sides of the aisle. So I am pleased now to yield to a senior member of the Florida delegation on the other side of the aisle, the co-chair, Mr. HASTINGS.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Thank you very much. I appreciate you, Mr. MICA, my colleague, for arranging this Special Order, and it is special that we come here to speak about a gentleman who was special to us all.

Madam Speaker, obviously, we are here with heavy hearts and with great sadness tonight in our honoring of a friend and a colleague, Congressman Bill Young.

Bill was an assiduous public servant and a tireless advocate for all Floridians; but above all, he was a man of integrity and a true statesman. The House of Representatives will not be the same without him. He served in Congress for 42 years; and I, as well as others, am deeply honored to have had the opportunity to serve alongside him for the past two decades. He dedicated himself to providing for our Nation's servicemen and servicewomen and was a powerful voice for America's best interests at home and abroad. His distinguished career has left its mark on the lives of countless Americans.

When I first came to Congress in 1992, I met with Bill Young and Sam Gibbons. They were on opposite sides of the aisle, but were dear friends, dedicated to Florida and to making the Florida delegation strong. I remember vividly learning from both of them through the years. In addition, throughout all of the travails of hurricanes and disasters, Bill Young stood with all of us who suffered during those periods, and he did everything he could to bring resources to Florida and to this Nation during disasters.

My first experience with an earmark was when Bill became chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I didn't know much about the process, but I knew that I wanted to get money in the budget to contribute to the African American Research Center in Fort Lauderdale in my congressional dis-

trict. When I went to him, I was nervous because I wasn't sure how it would be handled, and he calmed me very easily by saying, It is done. For sure, he had had a hand in the development of that particular research center, which stands, and I honor him for having assisted in bringing resources there.

Last week, Speaker BOEHNER said:

It has only been a week since we began trying to imagine the House without Bill Young—an impossible task in its own right—and now he is gone. In our sorrow, we recall how not a day went by without a colleague seeking Bill's counsel as he sat on his perch in the corner of the House floor.

I certainly had the distinction of going to that corner and consulting with him.

President Obama said in his statement:

Congressman Young will be remembered for his advocacy and support for the armed services, servicemembers and their families, as well as for his statesmanship and his long history of working across the aisle to keep our country moving forward.

Defense Secretary Hagel said:

He will be remembered as a passionate advocate for the welfare of America's servicemembers and military veterans. Though his loss will be felt by many, his legacy and commitment to a strong national defense will always inspire us.

It is the height of irony that our friend would pass at Walter Reed Hospital. No one in this body spent as much time with our military at Walter Reed and around this country as did Bill Young. He, of course, has a legacy that is far excellent in that arena and also in bringing resources to the area that he served as well as to other areas around this Nation.

Tonight, I join with the people of Florida in keeping Beverly, Bill's sons, grandchildren, family, friends, and staff in my thoughts and prayers during this time of enormous sadness and loss.

Once again, I thank you, Chairman MICA, for arranging for us to have the privilege of honoring this great American.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Now, in continuing hearing from the leadership of our delegation, I am pleased to yield to the chairman of the Florida delegation, the gentleman whose district is adjacent to Mr. Young's, to the south, Mr. VERN BUCHANAN.

Mr. BUCHANAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the memory of my dear friend, colleague and mentor, Congressman Bill Young.

For over four decades, there has not been a stronger voice in this Chamber for our brave men and women in uniform other than Bill Young. My district was just south of Bill Young's district, and we have almost 90,000 veterans. There is nobody who has benefited, I think, in terms of a district more than our veterans have in terms of Bill Young's leadership and in what he has brought to Pinellas County and

to the State of Florida. He was an inspiration to so many because he personified the most important virtue of public service—he did it for others.

As dean of the Florida delegation, Bill provided wisdom and counsel to Members on both sides of the aisle. He served this great institution with devotion, civility, and distinction. I am honored personally to have served with this extraordinary man. With his passing, the State of Florida and the Nation have lost an outstanding lawmaker, statesman, and public servant. My thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time.

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Mr. MICA. I am pleased now to recognize another colleague across the aisle. Again, Bill Young's friendships and his service included everyone in the House of Representatives and in the Congress, so I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from Ohio, MARCY KAPTUR.

Ms. KAPTUR. I want to thank Chairman MICA so very much for the privilege of extending the deepest condolences of the people of Ohio to the Young family, to the constituents of Congressman Bill Young's district in Florida.

It was such a privilege to know him. Truly, he was not just a vigilant patriot, though that surely would have been enough, but he really was a man of the House. He belonged here, and his people knew that for over four decades.

When I think of Bill Young, I think of words like "courage," "perseverance," "insight," and "fair play." He had a gentlemanly demeanor at any time that I ever encountered him. He had a respect for regular order, for the gavel, and for seniority, which I share. He had a fortitude about him that people in my part of the country call real "spunk," and he had a sparkle in his eye and an easy smile and an understanding. He was such a real human being.

Part of that is the fact that he grew up very poor in Pennsylvania in a coal town in an old shack. He really knew what poverty was. He didn't have an easy childhood and he never forgot that. Yet he rose to be a master appropriator. In that capacity, he was not imperious but collegial, and he handled the gavel with fair play.

He loved his wife, Beverly, so much. I can still see her sitting in the gallery or coming unannounced into a committee meeting. He loved his family and he loved Florida.

He worked so hard for the men and women in our armed services and our veterans, certainly in his own State where right near him is the Bay Pines Veterans Medical Center, the fourth largest veterans facility in the country, but also all the operations of SOUTHCOM, as in his last decade of service dealing with all that we have to on the Defense Subcommittee in terms of the wars being conducted in Afghanistan and, of course, Iraq. He was engaged in all the intelligence at the

highest levels and kept his good measure. His endurance and his heroic battles in these years that all of us witnessed showed the true measure of the man.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would just like to say I will be seeing Bill Young in all the old familiar places, not just here on the floor, but as we travel in codels to some of the most godforsaken places on Earth, as we visit some of the highest level research facilities in our country and our men and women in uniform. I shall always remember Bill Young and be grateful for having been able to serve with him.

Mr. MICA. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Miami, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART, another Florida colleague, who is also a gentleman who served with Mr. Young distinguishably on the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Chairman MICA, thank you for bringing us together today.

Madam Speaker, you have heard of Bill Young, the statesman, and that he was. We all know how he was, perhaps, the best friend and strongest ally of our troops, men and women in uniform, those in battle, those currently in uniform, and those who are veterans.

But those of us who worked with him and got to know him here know him, frankly, almost as like a godfather to all of us. There is not one time that we didn't go to him that he would not be helpful.

I remember after those storms in Florida, when we had a bunch of hurricanes, going to see Bill Young about getting help for the folks who had been hurt by the storms. His wisdom and his desire to help was always so present. He was always helpful, whether it was Everglades restoration, because he was also such a champion for the environment. Again, always with a smile.

Then I got to know him better when I, again, served with him in Appropriations and was able to see how he mastered that appropriations process like, frankly, potentially nobody before him and I think potentially nobody after him will again.

But I will tell you, Madam Speaker, the part that to me was a real privilege was that he was one of the people that I whipped. He was on my whip card. So I would go on different issues and talk to him about the issue and find out if he was leaning one way or another. Every time I went there, what I got from Bill Young was, frankly, a lesson. He instructed. I was never able to inform him about what the issues were; he informed me. He instructed me like he always instructed all of us. And always, Madam Speaker, with that incredible, warm smile, with that warm, firm handshake, which he had until the very end.

He never complained. We all know that for a long time he was in pain and yet never complained. He always wanted to make sure that you were feeling good, and he always wanted to know

what he could do for you, never asking for himself.

I said recently—and I have got to find out who said this—but I heard or read someplace that “to be a great man you first have to be a good man.” Madam Speaker, Bill Young was a great man for so many reasons: for all that he did for this country, for all that he did for the State of Florida, for all that he did for our troops and the environment, the way he helped his colleagues, or how generous and how humble and how caring and loving he was. He was an incredibly, an incredibly good man. And yes, if there is anybody that applies to, that before you can become a great man you have to be a good man, if there is anybody that that describes, it is our chairman, Bill Young.

To his family, to his constituents, to the troops, and the veterans who are, in essence, his family as well, our deepest condolences. Bill Young is irreplaceable. There will never be somebody like him again.

What a privilege and what an honor. One of the privileges and honors, the greatest privileges and honors of my life, was to be able to work with him, to get to know him, to be his friend.

So again, to his constituents and to his family, our condolences. We will miss him, and he will never be forgotten.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), again, reaching across the aisle with the respect and esteem in which Mr. Young was held.

Mr. FARR. Thank you, Congressman MICA, for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I feel it is a very special privilege to be able to pay honor to our colleagues here. I think of Bill Young as being one of the lions, one of the giants of this institution, because he really used the institution for what we all get elected to do.

First of all, he loved public service. He was in an elective office for 52 years between State and Federal Government. He also served in the National Guard Active Duty and reservist for 15 years. His life was about service. He used his service here in Congress to be what I think this institution is all about: it is about leadership; it is about friendship; and it is also about accomplishment. I don't think anybody has had a better record of accomplishment in so many different fields.

I came here in 1993, and I had the largest military base in the United States close—Fort Ord, California. I got to know the people on the Defense Appropriations Committee. On my side of the aisle was Jack Murtha. It seems like Jack's best friend was a Republican on the other side of the aisle, Bill Young. Jack said, You better go tell Bill everything you have told me about needing some help.

We were trying to convert swords to plowshares by building a brand-new university to serve the underserved

population in Fort Ord, and we needed appropriations for it. Bill just jumped on it. He knew the purpose. Even though he was a strong warrior, he really realized that this was the future after a base was closed.

I invited him out to the district. He came to Monterey, California, where we still had the Defense Language Institute. Bill went in there and saw that all the languages we were teaching were the old tape recorders where you had to wind and rewind. He said, My God, you need some modern equipment, and put in appropriations to get that equipment. He visited the Naval Postgraduate School and got a lot of really interesting feedback from soldiers who had just come out of theater.

But his and Jack's friendship—Jack Murtha, who predeceased him—was just remarkable in this House. If there is a legacy here, it is their legacy. It is how two people being on Appropriations Committee should—and we all need to go back to what we have been calling regular order, where we come here to accomplish things, to fix things that are broken. Bill Young was probably the first, if any, who would talk about needing to bring back the ability to help areas that just don't get formula money—earmarks. If you disclose of them and go through a process so that you don't have the client-assigned stuff, these things are good, particularly for rural Americans, and particularly for areas where people are really poor.

I think my favorite story is that when he came out to the Defense Language Institute, came on military air, Beverly, his wife, insisted, since I represent Carmel, that I get our former mayor, Clint Eastwood, to have lunch with them. So we arranged that at Clint's Mission Ranch.

On the way from Monterey over to Carmel, we passed by the beach, and there is a stranded sea lion there. Beverly gets out and says, We've got to take care of the sea lion before anything else, and had the entire crew of the airplane—because she insisted they had to come to lunch with her, they had to help get the sea lion. Well, we had marine mammal rescue, and they eventually showed up.

But when we got to the restaurant, I don't think anybody thought that the whole crew was going to come. Bill was insistent, no, everybody is equal here. It didn't matter whether you were a Congress member or just a crew member; you were going to get a chance to have lunch with Clint Eastwood.

We had a lot of laughs, a lot of discussion about things. Then that led to—and I hadn't realized it. Bill was a big animal rights supporter. He and I authored a bill with his friend, Bob Barker, who was here. I met Bob Barker through him. Bob Barker, “The Price is Right,” had dedicated a lot of his life to banning elephants in circuses. Bill said, I am going to author that bill. So we did a bipartisan author, and Bob Barker came. In fact, we

linked up with Kim Basinger, the movie star, who was very interested in that issue. We went on, and we didn't win that bill, but we won the puppy mill bill, and we won some other humane treatment of animals. He was really interested in that.

But best of all, I think he left a legacy that we need to get back to: a legacy of production, a legacy of comradery where we really like each other, and a legacy that takes care of not only all the soldiers—because they didn't care what rank you had; if you were a person in uniform, you were all equal and being treated in the most respectful way—but he also did that for people of less fortune and for animals who need a voice in Congress as well. What a wonderful man.

Beverly and your sons, I really am going to miss going to Appropriations Committee and seeing Bill there. So Beverly and your three adult sons, Rob, Billy, and Patrick, we all share your grief, and Congress will certainly miss Bill Young, a great man in this institution.

Mr. MICA. I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, the Honorable GUS BILIRAKIS, another Florida colleague, and he also has a district that is adjacent to Mr. Young's.

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Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember the life and service of someone I admire greatly for his wisdom and humility, by dear friend and mentor, Chairman Bill Young.

While I always referred to him as "Chairman" because of the respect he commanded, he used to beg me not to use that term, insisting, in his typical humble fashion, as Mr. FARR alluded to, that we were all equal in this Chamber.

Over the past five decades, the Chairman graciously served Florida and the Tampa Bay area, leading many projects and initiatives to promote economic growth and create jobs back at home. His contributions to his district, the entire Tampa Bay area, and to the military in particular, are immeasurable.

He was instrumental in saving MacDill Air Force Base and helped grow Tampa Bay into a hub for our defense industry. In addition, he played a significant role in winning critical funding for Bay Pines Veterans Administration Medical Center, which supports a large number of veterans in our area. For his efforts, my colleague and I have joined together in support of renaming this valuable medical facility in his honor.

His contributions also extend to higher education with his role in developing centers of excellence in technology and marine science at the University of South Florida.

Finally, we will all remember his work on behalf of sick children in creating a national registry for bone marrow donors.

While the Chairman came from humble beginnings, he has left behind a rich legacy that we, as Members of Congress and Americans, must all aspire to achieve. The Chairman was never afraid to reach across the aisle and always worked for the greater good.

I am extremely thankful that I was able to express my gratitude and admiration to him last week when I visited him at his bedside. I told him how much his colleagues and constituents loved him and appreciated all he did for them.

In closing, I wanted to share a few words from a final letter my father, former Congressman Mike Bilirakis, sent to his former colleague:

Dear Bill: Since we are roughly the same age (remember, I am 5 months older so we've joked about "respecting your elders"), we have expected that this day would come for both of us but first for me and not so soon. We grew up in the same Pittsburgh area at the same time—tough depression poverty, which made us tough. We didn't know each other then, but I guess our Lord decreed we would meet in Pinellas County, Florida, years later. We worked hard, climbed out of poverty and became successful—the good old American way.

Bill, you have earned eternal rest, but our world will certainly miss you. The Florida corner in the House Chambers will miss you as well. Thanks for being my friend and, in many ways, a younger mentor. Thanks for being a great American patriot. Thanks for the good you have done for all of us. Yours has been a life well lived. May your memory be eternal.

We will certainly miss you, Mr. Chairman.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, at this time I will yield back my time with the intent of relinquishing the balance of the time to one of the leaders from Florida and also a member of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. CRENSHAW.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues in paying tribute to my good friend and fellow Member of Congress, C.W. Bill Young.

More than four decades ago, I first met Bill when I served as a campaign aide to the late Congressman Bill Cramer. Bill Young was a Florida State Senator at the time who was seeking the St. Petersburg, West Florida Coast Congressional seat being vacated by my boss who was running in 1970 for the U.S. Senate.

Bill Young had already served as a Congressional aide to Bill Cramer and then was elected as Florida's first Republican State Senator since the Civil War. Bill Cramer when elected was the first GOP U.S. House Member since that era.

As fate would unfold, Bill Cramer lost and Bill Young took his seat in Congress.

I had aligned myself with Florida's West Coast GOP political operatives called the ICY Machine. Those were initials for Jack Insko, a top Cramer aide and political strategist, Bill Cramer and Bill Young, a Florida political powerhouse at that time.

While my boss lost his election, I gained great experience and wonderful friends. Among them, Bill Young, rising GOP star, and his two young aides, George Cretekos and Doug Gregory. Both George and Doug served with Bill Young for over three decades, during which I was privileged to count all among my friends and political allies.

As an aide to U.S. Senator Paula Hawkins from 1980 to 1985, I had the honor of working with two GOP leaders who worked tirelessly for Florida and our Nation.

I must say, two legends with two very different styles. Paula had a flair for the media and attention and Bill quietly pursued his legislative agenda. Both were highly effective in their own way. Paula championed missing children and Bill rose as a champion of our military. Now both have joined the ages and are part of the history of Congress and the State of Florida.

Having worked with Bill Young on military issues important to our State and Nation as recently as the past few weeks, I can tell you no one could be more effective. No one could be more respected or trusted.

While fond memories of Bill Young continue, his real legacy will transcend generations for our military and long benefit our national defense.

For his tireless work on behalf of all Americans and all citizens of the Sunshine State, I join my colleagues in this special tribute to C.W. Bill Young.

What a great privilege it has been to share part of my life and grow memories with Bill Young. I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Beverly, to the Young family and to his devoted staff and constituents.

REMEMBERING THE HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) will control the remainder of the hour.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, before I introduce and call on a couple of my colleagues, I would like to say a brief word about my longtime friend and mentor, C.W. Bill Young. I first met Bill when he was in the Florida Senate. He was the Republican leader in the Florida Senate. He was the minority leader. I think my colleagues might be interested to know that he was the Republican leader, minority leader, not because he gathered all the votes of the other minority members, the Republicans; he was the Republican leader because he was the only Republican in the Florida Senate.

You might say maybe that diminishes that leadership role, and I would say just the reverse is true because Bill Young was such a great leader, such a man of courage and conviction that he would stand up for whatever he believed, even if there was no one there

to stand up with. I think it is because of that conviction, because of that commitment, that we are here tonight to honor his legacy.

I found it interesting that about 25 years later I found myself in the Florida Senate, and I became the first Republican to be elected president of that body, and I got a note from Bill Young. He said, "We've come a long way."

Of course when I came to Congress, he was there to help me become a member of the Armed Services Committee because he knew that I cared about the military. He was there to help me become a member of the Appropriations Committee and the Defense Subcommittee which he loved so very much. He taught me and he taught all of us that everyone has value. Everyone has worth, whether it is a private first class or four star general, and he lived and died by the belief that if we are to be the land of the free, it is because we take care of our brave.

So that is the way he lived his life, and we will hear tributes tonight—we heard tributes last Thursday in Largo at his funeral, but I believe that the lasting legacy that Bill Young leaves will be seen for generations to come in the greatness of our military, and in the compassion that we have for those who serve and those who are wounded.

So, Madam Speaker, I simply want to say tonight that America lost a great leader, and I lost a great friend.

Godspeed, Bill Young.

Now I would like to yield to one of my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, the chairman of the State, Foreign Operations Subcommittee and a member of the Defense Subcommittee which Bill Young chaired, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to and celebrate the life of an outstanding public servant, Bill Young. It is a true honor to have been able to know a man like Chairman Young and to be able to call him both a friend and a role model for all of us. There is no one who was more respected, decent, gracious, dedicated and humble. Everyone who crossed his path is richer for the experience. That is evident through the hundreds of people who attended his memorial service last week. His service was attended by over 30 Members of Congress. During a time of such partisanship, the respect for Chairman Young was illustrated through the attendance from both sides of the aisle, including leadership.

The respect the military has for his lifelong advocacy for our national security and for our servicemembers was evident through the attendance and heartfelt eulogies of former Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James Amos.

It was clear that the Department of Defense depended on him. Immediately

before the service began, General Amos bestowed a very rare and appropriate honor by naming Chairman Young an honorary marine.

I will never forget when I was first appointed to the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. As one of the first women ever to serve on the subcommittee, I wasn't sure how I would be treated, but Bill immediately brought me in and treated me with respect and kindness, as he did to everyone. Gender didn't matter to him; he only cared about my commitment to the military and to our Nation.

When John Wooden wrote "the true test of a man's character is what he does when no one is watching," he clearly was talking about Chairman Young. Over the years, we have all heard many, many stories about the personal interest and assistance that he and Beverly provided for our wounded soldiers, but we never heard these stories from him. He never talked about what he did. He was motivated by doing what was right for someone else's health and well-being.

When Marine Lance Corporal Josh Callihan spoke at the memorial service, it was the first time that most of us had ever heard about the extraordinary efforts the Chairman and Beverly took to help this wounded warrior.

Lance Corporal Callihan had been shot in the back and sustained significant damage to his spinal cord. With no family support system, he was in Bethesda injured both physically and emotionally. Then he met Bill and Beverly Young, and his life changed forever. They stepped in and became his family, helping him to recover. Today, Josh calls the Chairman and Beverly "mom" and "dad." After many years of hard work, he is now married and expecting his first child. According to Josh, none of this would be possible without Bill Young.

As I was thinking about what I wanted to say about Chairman Young, I realized it was impossible to do justice to such an extraordinary man merely through words. He was truly one of a kind. The best way we can honor this man is to redouble our efforts to our national security and to the treatment of our servicemembers and their families. I ask that all of my colleagues join me to make sure that we carry on his legacy.

In closing, I want to let Beverly, their children, his friends and his staff, who were part of his family, know that you all remain in our thoughts and our prayers.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER), another member of the Homeland Security Subcommittee.

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding.

We can talk about Bill Young all night, a man who came from nothing and grew to be head and shoulders above, champion for America's military. But I think the thing that struck

everybody who ever met Bill Young was his humanity. He was just such a kind, gentle, fine man. He cared about every soul he met. He took the time when I was a freshman to meet me and talk to me. I told him I had some interest in appropriations and learning how it worked, and he sat down and talked to me about it. Whenever I had any questions I needed to ask him, he was always very, very informative and very, very kind in explaining things to people, to me and others.

Bill Young was a very special man because he came from very, very meager means and he rose up to a position of power, but you would have never known by his interaction with humanity that he was a man of power in this government because everybody who draws a breath was important to Bill Young. But the most important people were those who served in our armed services.

I wanted to share something which I think is a perfect description of the kind of man Bill Young was. I had the privilege to go on a trip with him to Normandy for an anniversary of that landing on D-day, and on the way we landed in Shannon, Ireland. When we arrived, it just so happened that at least one or two brigades from Fort Hood, Texas, which is in my district, were there, ordinary soldiers and their officers in transit to Afghanistan.

When Bill Young came into the room, ordinary soldiers, as if he were some kind of star that you would see in a rock concert, started moving over to have their picture taken with Chairman Young. Chairman Young at that time was in a wheelchair most of the time. But as he did when he presented his bill on this floor, he stood with every soldier and took a picture. I stood on the periphery of that and listened. He asked about their parents and where were they from and about their deployments and their needs. Just a gentle, kind, friendly man with hundreds of soldiers gathered around him.

I heard one soldier ask another soldier:

Who is that guy? It looks like everybody here wants to have their picture taken.

The other guy said:

I don't know for sure, but the way I understand it, he is the guy who makes sure when we go to battle, we have everything that we need to be victorious.

That is a great statement about a human being and a great statement about the man. He cared about all who serve our Nation, but in particular those who risk their lives on our behalf. In honor of Bill Young, I will always remember that day where soldiers flocked to him just to be seen with Mr. Young.

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Mr. CRENSHAW. I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), another member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee that Bill Young chaired.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, tonight I join my colleagues in honoring the life and legacy of a great man and an American patriot, Bill Young.

I keep looking to my right and expect to see him with that great smile, but I am sure tonight he is sitting at the right hand of God.

The death of Congressman Bill Young was a great loss for this Chamber, for our country, and for the millions of men and women in uniform who were Bill Young's priority for more than 40 years. Anyone who has served with Bill knew of his unwavering dedication to our Active Duty military, our veterans, and their families.

As chairman of both the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee, he was both firm and fair. When it came to our troops, he was uncompromising and insisted on nothing but the best for the U.S. servicemembers.

Chairman Young was motivated by his genuine and deep concern for the well-being of the individual soldier, sailor, airman, marine, and guardsman. His concern went far beyond politics and policies. As many of you know, Bill and his wonderful wife, Beverly, took special interest in our wounded veterans, visiting the wounded regularly at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Whether in a committee hearing or in the military hospitals around the world, he was tireless in visiting, speaking with, and listening to these incredible servicemembers.

While we can't hope to replace Bill Young, perhaps we can follow his example and let his integrity, his gracious manner, his firm commitment to the men and women who protect this country serve as an inspiration to this Chamber as we continue to wrestle with the same issues to which he devoted his life.

On a personal note, I was honored to work with Chairman Young on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. I was continually impressed by his depth of knowledge. I think it is safe to say that no one understood the Department of Defense quite like Bill Young. His knowledge, expertise, and compassion will be sorely missed on the subcommittee.

On my own behalf and on behalf of so many former Members who served with Bill, like our mutual friend and former chairman, Jerry Lewis, I extend my condolences to his wife, Beverly, his sons, and his entire family.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you.

I now yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), another member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

Mr. COLE. I thank my friend for yielding.

Madam Speaker, like every Republican in this Chamber, until 10 days ago, every day I served in the House of Representatives I served with Bill Young.

It has been noted here that he was a lion and a legend. At the time I was

fortunate enough to come to this Chamber in 2003, he was probably at the zenith of his influence. He was chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, and he was the confidant of the President, our military leaders, and leaders around the world at a time when the United States was at war.

No one cared more about the defense of the United States of America than Bill Young, and no one cared and did more for the people who actually bear the burden, the men and women that wear the uniform of this country—past, present, and future—than Chairman Young.

He was also a role model for many of us, a mentor, and a friend. He was somebody who would reach out and help you, take care of you, look after you, and give you the wisdom and advice that only he, with all his years of experience, can give. I remember on one occasion, not too long ago, when the chairman was obviously ill in the last several years of his life and still very active chairing our committee, a pretty busy man, a man dealing with his own problems; and I had tornados that hit my town in Moore, Oklahoma. Two days after those tornados hit, Bill Young was on the phone to tell me that I would be getting a telephone call from representatives of a New York investment bank called Cantor Fitzgerald, which had suffered grievous damage during 9/11, where they had lost 650 of their 950 employees at the World Trade Center. That company made a commitment that it would look after all of its people and all of their families and would reconstitute itself, and it did. Then they built on that commitment and said, We are going to help other people that are in tragedy by devoting all of our revenues earned on 9/11 of every year—not just profits, everything we earn—to help people in need. They have kept that commitment.

Bill Young had forged a relationship with them because of all they had done to help men and women in uniform and the victims of disaster. He said they will be calling you and they want to help. They did. They helped literally hundreds of families with millions of dollars' worth of personal and directed relief. That probably never would have happened if Bill and Beverly Young had not reached out to me at that point, and I and the people in my community will be forever grateful to them.

So we have lost arguably, I think, the greatest Republican Member of this body in the last two generations. We have not seen his like before, and it will be a long time again before we see anyone that rivals his compassion, his character, his civility, his decency, and his absolute devotion and commitment to our country and to the men and women who defend it.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), another member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. DENT. I too want to take a moment to reflect upon the life and

service and dedication of Bill Young. Much has been said about him already this evening, and I too, like many, look back at that corner and want to see Bill Young there, but obviously he is not with us.

Before calling Florida his home, Chairman Young was actually born in Harmarville, Pennsylvania, in Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania, that area best known for steel and coal. A lot of tough people came out of that area, and certainly Bill Young, I think, really had a lot of the character traits I associate with people there. He could be very tough when he needed to be, very firm. He was just like steel.

Also, we should not forget about his compassion. He was a kind man, a gentle man, a patient man. I would often ask him questions or make a request of him from time to time, and he always listened to me very patiently. He had served here for 22 terms. He didn't have to spend a whole lot of time with me, but he did, and I always appreciated that. He was a great mentor to me and to many other Members here. It was a pleasure to serve with him.

There are so many other things about Chairman Young, too. It has been mentioned his support of our troops, particularly our wounded warriors, and the impact they had on him and the impact he had on those wounded warriors.

When you get beyond the defense and veterans policy, though, Chairman Young played an integral role in creating a national registry for bone marrow donors back in 1986, and that registry helped save more than 50,000 lives over the years.

Again, not having known Bill Young as long as some of my colleagues, I just wanted to say what an extraordinary privilege it was for me to serve with him, to know him, to call him a friend, and really to be one of my mentors here in the House.

My deepest thoughts and prayer go out to Beverly and the entire Young family during a difficult time.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I now yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY), one of Mr. Young's colleagues.

Mr. POSEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I first met the man, the legend, really, known as Bill Young, in 1974; but it wasn't until I got elected to Congress in 2008 that I realized what a larger-than-life true leader this man was and what a wonderful and great mentor he was not just to me and everybody in my freshman class, but we find out everybody that has ever served in this place. He was wise, gentle, kind, honest, thoughtful, and helpful to anyone just for the asking.

I called him a hero; and until his last days, he would blush, as he was so humble, that anybody would address him like that. What a wonderful man. Never, ever before and probably never

again will every man and woman serving us in uniform have as great an advocate as they had in Congressman Young.

My thoughts and prayers remain with Beverly, his family, and his staff. Rest in peace, Bill.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you.

Now I yield time to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. NUGENT), another colleague and a member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. NUGENT. Madam Speaker, it is with great humility that I stand here tonight, and I think you have heard from a lot of Members tonight talk about Bill Young.

I think he has made the same impression on so many Members on this side of the aisle and on the other side about his humility, about his true caring about people, about the caring that he has for the members of the military.

As a father and a parent of three sons who serve in the United States Army, what struck me so much about Bill and his wife, Beverly, was their true compassion, particularly his compassion as it relates to those who serve us. Beverly was really the fire behind Bill with regards to a lot of these issues as it relates to our veterans. Bill led the way, but Beverly was right there carrying the flag along side of Bill.

Madam Speaker, they were a team together. They worked together for the betterment of all, and that is why Bill is such a great American. While you have heard tonight in this House talk about his legacy, you can't replace Bill Young.

When I first met Bill Young here in this Chamber 3 years ago, he was on that side sitting over there, and he had had a fall and he was injured and he had been at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and his health continued to decline over the last few years. But I came in every day in these Chambers to go see Bill Young because Bill was such a good, kindhearted person. He had a great grip when he shook your hand, but he always had a smile. When you asked him, Mr. Chairman, how are you feeling today? It was never about him. You heard that from other Members today. It was always about, How are your sons? How are your boys? He knew that they were serving in harm's way in Iraq and had been in Afghanistan. He was more worried about them than himself.

I saw him and his wife, Beverly, on the airplane ride back to Tampa almost every week, and without fail they would offer their better seats to a serviceman or servicewoman who was in uniform walking down the aisle. They would get up and say, Would you sit here?

That is just the way they were built.

Bill and Beverly were a perfect match, and Bill has gone on to a place that we can only aspire to go. I truly believe that Bill is at the right hand of God. Maybe he is talking about appropriations, talking about what is right with America.

Mr. Chairman, I do appreciate the time you have given all of us to be down here to talk about our good friend, C.W. Bill Young, who will be missed by all.

God bless America.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you, Mr. NUGENT.

Our hour is just about over. We could go on for hours, but I think you have all heard tonight that Bill Young was a man that loved his Lord, he loved his wife, he loved his family, he loved his country. You might say it just seems like they don't make them like that any more, but the truth is that they never did.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Madam Speaker, I was honored to be asked by the Young family to be among those who delivered eulogies for my departed friend and mentor last week in Largo, Florida. I ask unanimous consent that my statement be included in the record:

"From the back row of the House Chamber, Congressman C.W. 'Bill' Young was able to see across the House Floor. And, for over forty years, through the terms of eight Presidents and 16 Secretaries of Defense, he watched members of both parties meet and greet each other as both Democratic and Republican Speakers presided.

"From that prized vantage point, he could also keep tabs on his longtime Defense Appropriations Committee counterpart and partner, Jack Murtha, sitting opposite him in the back row of the Democratic side of the aisle known as the 'Pennsylvania section.'

"Jack Murtha left us a few years ago, but Bill soldiered on. In recent months he used a walker or sat in a wheelchair taking greetings from colleagues from both sides of the aisle. He was beloved—engaging everyone with a smile and handshake, however he might have felt on that particular day. He was always gracious, well-humored and accommodating to freshmen and old-timers alike.

"It is well known that Bill Young chaired the House Appropriations Committee, and twice, its Defense Subcommittee. He also served as Ranking Member when the majority changed hands. He loved our committee, constantly saluted our members for their dedication and fully expected each one to support the process, limit debate, support open rules and with a minimum of partisanship and 'do the nation's business.'

"A copy of the Constitution was ever-present in his pocket, to remind all of Article 1, Section Nine, Clause 7. For those of you unfamiliar with this provision, I suggest you look it up!

"On the Defense Subcommittee, he always spoke of the dedication of members of our Armed Forces and the sacrifice of their families and our committee's obligation to serve them!

"He would say at every meeting: our soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen and women are the ones doing the work of freedom—the ones who work every day to make the world safer for Americans and our friends and more dangerous for those who would do us harm.

"That's why Bill Young would often state on the House Floor, 'there is no room for politics in our bill'—we must always be there for all those who serve and sacrifice.

"As you know, Bill and Beverly visited the old Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the old Bethesda Naval and the newly-expanded Bethesda National Military Medical Center just about every week.

"They were quiet visits, executed without fanfare or press release.

"Each time, they met with our wounded warriors and their families, adopting their hardships and often underwriting their expenses—helping them meet every type of crisis: food, travel, rent, inattention from medical personnel or hospital administrators.

"The Youngs confronted military brass whenever necessary in order to get those with physical and mental wounds the best care and support possible. They were fierce in their determination!

"And wherever they were with the troops, the Youngs took names, called their families and carried grievances to 'the top' to be resolved. This was their SOP, their passion, and woe to those who underestimated their dedication and resolve!

"You might say from time to time they 'rang a few chimes' to get a tough situation resolved! In fact, I am confident that there are many officers with us here today who would vouch for that. I won't ask for a show of hands, but you know who you are!

"Typical was the story Bill told us once—about a Saturday lunch at a small restaurant in Alexandria, Virginia—an area teeming with military personnel on-duty and off-duty. As Beverly left the table to greet another soldier or Marine, Bill was presented with the meal check and was stunned! '\$171 for a tuna fish sandwich and a burger and two cokes?!?' The waitress calmly replied that 'It's not just a sandwich and a burger, sir. Your wife volunteered you to pay for that soldier at that table and that Marine family over there and the sailor in the corner and a couple that have already left.'

"I also know that, over the years, many military families were pleasantly surprised when their grocery tab was covered by Bill or Beverly Young standing behind them in the supermarket check-out line.

"Bill and my late father served together for a few years before my father retired from Congress in 1974. With that early tie, he has been a friend and mentor to me since my arrival.

"I know these personal connections may not count for much these days, but were it not for Bill, it is likely that I would not be serving on the Defense Appropriations Committee or honored to be speaking here today.

"Nor would I have had the opportunity to occupy the back row of the House chamber—from which Bill Young had an expansive view of American history as few others ever did or as few others ever will.

"He personally made much of that history, directing an appropriations process that actually worked, despite its procedural flaws and partisan challenges.

"It is well-documented that his strong support for our national security made America the envy of the world and improved the lives of our servicemembers and their families in more ways than they will ever know and assured that their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

"A reverent hush has now fallen over that back row of the House chamber.

"The Congress has lost a leader.

"The nation has lost an experienced authority on national security.

"Our Armed Forces have lost a valuable partner.

"And whether they know it or not, the troops and their families have lost one of the best friends they ever had.

"We all have lost a great, principled man who lived a life from which we all could learn.

"May the tributes and prayers that have flowed in recent days be a source of comfort and strength to you, Beverly, and to Billy, Patrick and Rob and the rest of the Young family and his loyal, long-serving staff—past and present—both in his personal offices in Washington and Florida and the Defense Committee's staff—the unsung majority and minority professionals who make the Committee work.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the sun is setting on an American life of service. Bill Young, now an Honorary Marine, may be gone, but he will never be forgotten!

"From the back row of the House chamber, Bill Young had a front row seat to history—a history he helped shape. And for that, our nation is a stronger and a better place."

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our late colleague, Congressman Bill Young.

Congressman Young was an extraordinary public servant whose legacy of caring for his constituents and veterans will not soon be forgotten. I am truly honored to have served alongside him in Congress.

For more than four decades, Congressman Young championed legislation to improve the lives of Floridians and all Americans and never hesitated to reach across the aisle to find common ground.

A veteran of the Army National Guard, Congressman Young used his expertise on defense and security issues to advocate for our men and women in uniform. Throughout his legislative career, Congressman Young worked diligently to ensure that our military had access to the training and equipment necessary to be successful in their missions. He also stood by our brave soldiers and their families at home—making sure military retirees had access to health care, defending benefits for military spouses, supporting our wounded veterans, and honoring our fallen heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Congressman Young was a tireless advocate for Florida. In the 1980's, he established the first moratorium on drilling off the West Coast of Florida, and fought subsequent efforts to repeal this moratorium. Mr. Young also championed landmark legislation to protect the Everglades, raising his voice to break a deadlock amongst his colleagues.

His work to establish the National Marrow Donor program and support for biomedical research is another example of how Congressman Young's efforts will touch lives many years after his public service.

I remember shortly after I was first elected to Congress, Mr. Young made it a point to reach out and share his insights with me. During our time together on the Appropriations Committee, I was so fortunate to learn from this experienced Floridian and great statesman.

Congressman Young's leadership and service to all Floridians will be truly cherished and forever missed. He never stopped working for a better nation and a better Florida, and for that, we should all be thankful. Our nation has lost a true champion whose legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Chairman Bill Young, whose passing we mourn and whose dedication to America's servicemembers is well known to his fellow Floridians, as well as to all who serve in this House.

Taking care of our nation's men and women in uniform was his passion. He often called them, "kids" because he cared for them as deeply as if they were family.

Chairman Young was an officer and a Gentleman. He served for nine years in the Army National Guard. During his decades in Congress, he and his wife, Beverly, regularly visited with hospitalized combat troops in Florida, and here at Bethesda. They helped arranging travel for military family members, or those who were having trouble paying the bills. Here in the House, at the Appropriations Committee, and in any other way he could find, he was tireless in his work on behalf of servicemembers, veterans and their families.

I worked with him when we were trying to finish the new courthouse in Orlando. This was just after the Oklahoma City Bombing, and all the new security requirements that were added to protect the buildings and the people in them.

The project was \$19 million over budget, but the Chairman came to what must have been the longest town hall meeting ever. Everyone had something to say. The Chairman was a gentleman as always and wanted what was best for the people of Florida, regardless of party. This was the case also when it came to funding for research. Chairman Young knew how important cutting edge research is and made it a priority to find the funding to help future generations of Americans.

Madam Speaker, as we say goodbye to our friend and colleague, Chairman Bill Young, I want to thank him for being a reasonable person to work with. All of our encounters were pleasant and I will miss working with him.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, C.W. Bill Young was a truly great American who served the people of the State of Florida with the utmost degree of professionalism, excellence, and dedication for more than 50 years in both the Florida State Senate and the United States House of Representatives.

It was truly an honor and a privilege for me to serve with Bill, and it would be impossible to list all the things that I have learned from Bill in the few short minutes that I have today. Anyone who was fortunate enough to get to know Bill can tell you that there was perhaps no greater advocate for our Nation's veterans and no greater friend to our military than Bill Young.

Last week, I was here on this floor to offer legislation to rename the Bay Pines VA Medical Center after Bill. The enormous outpouring of support, with 378 original cosponsors, was a testament to Bill's tireless work on behalf of veterans and the boundless respect that his colleagues had for him. But, what many may not know is that the current medical center in Bay Pines may not have existed at all if not for Bill's work back in 1976. As President Ford travelled through Florida, Bill joined him aboard Air Force One. Despite opposition from high ranking senior officials in the Administration, Bill convinced President Ford that the veterans of Central Florida needed a new facility to make sure that our Nation upheld our solemn promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and

his orphan." Thanks to Bill that facility was built.

Madam Speaker, Bill's distinguished service to our Nation, as a veteran and a lawmaker, stands as a shining example for every public servant, and indeed every American, of what can be achieved through hard-work, patriotism, and an abiding faith in God. My wife Vicki and I extend our deepest condolences to Bill's wife, Beverly, children, Rob, Billy and Patrick and the entire Young family. We will all miss Bill dearly, but we know that his legacy will never be forgotten and that our Nation is that much stronger thanks to his service.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

□ 2030

Mr. JEFFRIES. Madam Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to rise this evening and once again stand as an anchor for the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order, this hour of power, where, for the next 60 minutes, members of the Congressional Black Caucus will have an opportunity to speak to the American people about building a budget to create progress and prosperity for all Americans in this great country of ours.

Now, earlier today, myself and several other Members of Congress, including the distinguished Representative from the Ninth Congressional District of New York, YVETTE CLARKE, and the legendary Congressman JOHN LEWIS, had an opportunity to attend the homegoing service of Congressman Major Owens, who so proudly served in this institution for 24 years, first elected in 1982, having retired in 2006.

As I listened to speaker after speaker reflect on Congressman Owens' time in this great institution, it seemed to me that one of the things that became increasingly clear was his steadfast commitment to making sure that the funding priorities that emanated from this Congress were decent, were humane, were humanitarian, and were designed to stand up for and protect the least of those in American society.

Congressman Owens, during his 24 years in this Congress, consistently stood up for funding as it relates to early childhood education. He consistently stood up for funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He consistently stood up for social safety net programs. He consistently stood up to open up the doors of the American Dream for the greatest number of people possible.

And so, in that regard, on the day of his homegoing service, I think it appropriate that we just dedicate the pathway toward prosperity that we are endeavoring to put forth today in the great spirit of Congressman Major Owens, who, for more than two decades labored in the vineyards of this Congress, fighting for budgets that stood up for the least of those amongst us.

I want to yield first to the distinguished chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, who so ably and passionately and intelligently led the CBC forward in this 113th Congress. Let me now yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio, Chairwoman MARCIA FUDGE.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank my friend for yielding, and I would like to thank my colleagues, Congressmen JEFFRIES and HORSFORD, for once again leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order Hour.

Mr. Speaker, this week, the House and Senate conferees will begin deliberations to produce a budget for the first time in 4 years. Mr. Speaker, these deliberations, which are long overdue, are critical because they may provide a long-term plan that will continue to move our country forward out of our economic recession and towards a stronger America. There is a long overdue discussion needed.

For so many around this country, the barriers to economic opportunity and mobility have become insurmountable. The American people are looking to Congress to provide leadership and to turn our economy around. Unfortunately, some in Congress have put austerity before economic recovery, draining resources that might otherwise have improved our economic outlook.

While many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are focused on shrinking the government at any cost, the CBC is focused on making our government smarter and its programs more efficient. It is time to prioritize projects that will not only turn our country's economy around, but that will also open the doors of opportunity for future generations.

No longer can we ignore high levels of unemployment among those living in poverty and the disproportionately high unemployment rates among people of color.

We cannot pretend that our current investments in education are sufficient, while report after report details our country's academic shortcomings and our declining international standing.

We must acknowledge the fact that one in five children are hungry, and nearly 50 million Americans live in households suffering from food insecurity.

We must face the reality of a crumbling transportation infrastructure and the fact that improvement costs rise every year we delay investments.

Congress can spend the next month-and-a-half hiding from these truths and hoping for an improved economy that

will magically fix these problems, or we can directly address our issues through bipartisan cooperation and with a common goal to make our country better.

Congress can place a renewed focus on investing in the American people through quality programs that promote access, equality, and accountability. All this can be done while we cut wasteful spending, preserve the Affordable Care Act, and set the stage for meaningful tax reform.

Admittedly, that may seem like a lot of priorities to tackle for one Congress, much less this one, but we can. We can do this if we move past the usual partisan bickering and do what is most important for the Nation.

Of course, as they say, the devil is in the details. A very smart, ambitious, and detailed plan is necessary to make it work. Luckily, the Congressional Black Caucus has just the plan to make this work: the CBC budget.

The CBC budget cuts wasteful spending, invests in education, preserves the ACA, provides the resources to rebuild our transportation infrastructure, addresses crippling poverty, creates jobs now, and ensures America is a leader in the high-growth industries of the future.

I want to thank Congressman BOBBY SCOTT for all of his work on the CBC budget.

By considering ideas and proposals from the CBC budget, Congress can stimulate the economy while expanding the middle class. From the dark days of the government shutdown, this opportunity is now a bright spot for Congress and this country. We can rebuild America using the principles on which our Nation was founded: that everyone, no matter their background, should have the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

To my colleagues in the House and Senate, we have the opportunity and a blueprint. Let's build a better America together.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished chair of the Congressional Black Caucus for her always thoughtful and eloquent remarks.

I now want to yield some time to the architect of the CBC budget, the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, Representative BOBBY SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding, and I join in your remarks for praising Congressman Major Owens, because he, as you pointed out, led the Congressional Black Caucus budget for many years. He showed how you can be fiscally responsible and still address the critical needs of our Nation with a particular emphasis on the least of these and the need to invest in education. So I appreciate your comments.

Mr. Speaker, as the conferees begin to negotiate a budget agreement to fund the Federal Government for the remainder of fiscal year 2014, they should look at the Congressional Black Caucus budget. The CBC budget makes

tough choices, but not at the expense of our most vulnerable communities.

The CBC budget cancels the economically disastrous sequester. It protects and enhances Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, and other vital safety net programs that protect millions of families from poverty. It also reduces our Nation's budget deficit by approximately \$2.8 trillion over the next decade.

Mr. Speaker, most of the ideas that have been presented over the past to either cancel the sequester or reduce the deficit almost always involve proposals that cut Social Security and Medicare. These ideas have included changing the way the Social Security benefits are calculated, the so-called chained CPI that cuts the cost of living increases or raises the age of eligibility for Medicare from 65 to 67. These are cuts in those programs.

The CBC budget shows how you can be fiscally responsible without attacking those critical programs that people have paid for during their working years. The CBC budget is able to pay for the cancellation of the sequester and reduce the budget deficit without harmful cuts to Social Security and Medicare. It calls for revenue enhancements totaling \$2.7 trillion over the next decade.

Our budget outlines how the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee can reach this number by highlighting several options that total \$4.2 trillion that could be used to reach the \$2.7 trillion revenue target. Some of these options include \$1.1 trillion by limiting the deductibility of corporate interest payments.

Now, when corporations want to raise money, they can sell stocks or they can sell bonds. If they sell stocks, they make a profit and pay dividends to their stockholders, but they pay tax on the income before they pay the dividends. With corporate debt financing, with bonds, when you pay the interest on the bonds, that is tax deductible.

Why should there be a tax preference for debt financing instead of equity financing? If it was the same and you deny the deductibility of corporate debt interest payments, you could raise \$1.2 trillion over 10 years.

You could close special tax breaks and corporate loopholes by limiting deductions for upper-income individuals, closing some of the corporate loopholes, like the gas and oil advantages that they enjoy.

You can raise almost \$1 trillion, over \$800 billion, by taxing capital gains and dividends as ordinary income. Traditionally, 30, 40, 50 years ago, they were taxed at, actually, above ordinary income for dividends. If you tax them just the same, \$880 billion could be achieved.

A surcharge, 5.4 percent surcharge on income over \$1 million gets you almost a half a trillion dollars.

A trading speculation tax.

You could also limit the Bush-era tax cuts to that portion of your income,

cancel those tax cuts on that portion of your income over \$250,000. Only a privileged few make more than \$250,000, so that \$200 billion could be achieved without being disadvantageous to very many individuals.

Almost another \$135 billion can be raised by returning the estate tax exemption to what it was in 2009. You could raise over \$300 billion if you reduce it to what the rate was when President Clinton left office.

These are just some of the ideas, and we have listed them specifically, showing over \$4 trillion of possibilities for only \$2.7 trillion to make our budget add up.

Now, that is a lot of money, but it is in stark contrast to the budget that we actually passed in this House, because that budget calls for closing a gap of \$4 trillion. Unspecified, I don't know how in the world they are going to close a \$4 trillion deficit because they would have to raise \$4 trillion in taxes, or if they are not raising any taxes, spending cuts in the area, in discretionary spending in the area of one-third across the board. Now, we are having trouble dealing with a sequester of about a 10 percent cut across the board. You can imagine how unlikely it would be to achieve one-third across-the-board cuts.

So this budget is real. They are real numbers. The revenue enhancements provided in the CBC budget would allow Congress to totally cancel the sequester, actually pass a jobs bill totaling about half a trillion dollars, which would end the recession by putting millions of Americans back to work, and provide billions more for long-term investments in our economy through education, job training, health care, and advanced science and research.

As I said earlier, these reforms contained in the CBC budget would reduce the deficit by about approximately \$2.8 trillion over the next decade when compared to the CBO's baseline. This would put our Nation on a strong and sustainable fiscal path, all without jeopardizing programs that support our seniors and programs that educate our next generation of leaders in business, science, and technology.

The CBC budget would be a wise starting point for the House and Senate conferees, much better than the budget that we passed, because there is that \$4 trillion gap that is unexplained. These numbers add up.

It is an imperative that the Congress pass a budget that expands economic opportunity, invests in the American people, and reduces the deficit. The CBC budget presents a concrete plan, in stark contrast to the budget that we passed in the House, because it is backed up by actual numbers; and it adds up, and it shows how we can reduce the deficit while not being forced to make further cuts to vital programs that support our Nation's safety net.

Most importantly, the CBC budget presents a clear path both to economic and fiscal prosperity for our Nation.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

□ 2045

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Virginia for his very thoughtful and comprehensive remarks.

It is now my privilege to yield the floor to the distinguished gentlelady from California, Representative BARBARA LEE, a very distinguished member of the House Budget Committee, someone who has consistently been a voice for the voiceless and an advocate for the poor, for the disenfranchised, for all those that are aspiring to the American Dream.

Ms. LEE of California. First of all, let me thank you, Congressman JEFFRIES, for your tremendous leadership, for your vigilance, and for your dedication. Every week, you have brought forth these discussions to really inform and educate the public about the very important work of the Congressional Black Caucus, which, of course, is part of our work to strengthen our Nation with policies and a budget that will reignite the American Dream for all. So I just have to thank you for the time that you have put into this because this is so important, and your voice and leadership is tremendously needed at this moment in our history.

Also, I just have to salute our phenomenal chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, the gentlewoman from Ohio, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, for her very bold and her brilliant leadership, ensuring that the entire Congressional Black Caucus continues to be the conscience of the Congress.

As a member of both the Appropriations Committee and the Budget Committee, I have seen firsthand the Tea Party Republican vision for our country's future, and believe you me, it is not a vision of shared prosperity or economic growth. This was reaffirmed earlier this month when the Tea Party Republicans held the government hostage in a failed attempt to take away health care from millions of Americans across the country.

This week, as House and Senate conferees meet to develop a broader budget plan, I am pleased to join my CBC colleagues calling on Congress to adopt a fair and equitable budget, such as the budget the Congressional Black Caucus proposed earlier this year.

And I, too, must thank the gentleman from Virginia, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, for his stellar and dedicated leadership in leading the Congressional Black Caucus' task force in the development of this. It is a pro-growth, pro-people, and pro-American budget.

Now we have already seen through the Republican Ryan budget, which was released earlier this year, what the Tea Party's priorities are. Their budget would shortchange 99 percent of the American people in order to give even more tax breaks to millionaires and to billionaires. It protects tax loopholes

for special interests and Big Oil, and at a time when we need job creation the most, the Tea Party Republican budget would kill more than 2 million American jobs in 2014 alone.

The Republican budget would take away food from hungry children and families, take thousands of children off of Head Start, and close the door to college for thousands of students next year. In fact, Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of all of the Tea Party Republican budget cuts target programs for people who are poor or low income. Communities of color, once again, would be hardest hit, communities that have already borne the brunt of the last economic recession. And all this is taking place as income inequality only continues to grow.

The Tea Party's vision of America is very clear. Their budget would shred the safety net, shatter our economic recovery, and push millions of struggling families over the edge.

Now, in stark contrast, the Congressional Black Caucus budget is a different way forward. This is a document that shows our Nation's priorities and values.

A budget is a moral document. How we spend our money reflects our values, and the CBC budget spends money where we value it the most. It protects and enhances Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, better known as TANF, and all of our vital safety net programs that keep millions out of poverty. The CBC budget also protects all of our safety net programs, including SNAP.

While protecting these and other important antipoverty programs, the CBC budget also makes sound investments in critical areas like infrastructure, education, innovation, and poverty reduction in order to create ladders of opportunity for all.

Finally, we must ensure that the Pentagon will not be exempt from any budget deals. The Pentagon should be audited and their bloated spending kept in check. Billions and billions are spent and wasted every year, and the American people deserve to know where their taxpayer dollars are going. Not only will it bring accountability to the Defense Department, but those wasted funds could be used for programs like Head Start or Meals on Wheels.

So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, let me remind all of my colleagues that a budget, once again, as I said earlier, is a moral document. How we spend our money reflects who we are as a Nation. We must recognize that the choices we make impact real people and especially the most vulnerable: people of color, women, and children.

I hope that tonight in honor and in memory of our beloved, the late Congressman Major Owens, who worked so hard—and I had the privilege and honor to work with him and Congressman SCOTT each and every year for a fair and balanced budget. I hope that we

will remember his legacy by recommitting ourselves to his values and his ideals by putting people first in every budget that we put forward.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlelady from California for her very eloquent and thoughtful comprehensive remarks, as well as the remarks of Representative BOBBY SCOTT as well, and noting, of course, the role that the late Congressman Major Owens played in the context of the CBC budget during the years that he served in this Congress with such distinction.

I want to now yield the floor to the distinguished gentlelady from Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, whom I have the honor and the privilege of serving with on the House Judiciary Committee, who represents her district in Houston so ably, but of equal significance has stood on the floor of the House of Representatives as a Member of Congress standing up for those who might not otherwise be able to stand up for themselves in the context of making sure they get a fair shake in their pursuit of the American Dream.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman from New York. It is a pleasure to be able to join you and my colleagues today, and I thank you for beginning your remarks today, continuing the tribute that we have given to Congressman Major Owens. He would be proud that we were here tonight speaking for the voiceless, speaking for the poor, speaking for those who need educational dollars, speaking for those who, with a little investment, would, again, be able to reach for and grab the American Dream.

I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for again bringing us together. We all have different responsibilities, Judiciary, Homeland Security. We are all concerned about comprehensive immigration reform, border security. It is important, however, that we give a challenge and a charge to those individuals who will be gathering to reform the budget, and I cannot thank you enough for your timeliness and your leadership on these issues.

So I rise today, joining my colleagues, and adding, again, my appreciation to the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman FUDGE, who, in a day or two, will be joining the Ag conference and will be raising her voice for individuals who simply want a good and decent meal. I want to thank her for her leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus.

I will repeat the words of my colleagues, and those words are that we remain, I believe, the heart and conscience for the American people whose voices, again, and whose issues may be lost in the conflicts of partisanship. The Congressional Black Caucus speaks clearly and loudly to the issue of pain suffered by so many that are poor in this country.

So tonight I want to give a sense of urgency, and I want to raise the siren.

I want to have a clanging bell, a loud noise, a banging of the drums, a call to the town by the town crier that we just can't live, we cannot suffer anymore in budgetless, fundingless government that we are now in.

The President of the United States has called on Congress to do its job. The President provided great wisdom and leadership in the first beginning stages of his administration in 2009 when he wisely, through great sacrifice and criticism, presented the stimulus package to the Congress and infused needed and important dollars to create growth and jobs, some 3 million-plus jobs, closing the gap on some of the bleeding that was going on. Having built on the restoration of the auto industry, President Obama continued to build on the restoration of Wall Street. All of the prime industries that were crying out to this Nation, our President, along with the Democrats, sacrificed to do what is right for this Nation.

And, of course, as many know, it was a sacrifice for the Congressional Black Caucus, because at the same time, we knew that there were people who were suffering, but we looked to the greater good. And now we have come to ask, Is there anyone listening to the greater good?

We don't have to go very far to look and see that the size of the middle class that my friends on the other side of the aisle—Republicans—keep talking that they are for the middle class, and all we need do is to look and to be able to see its decline. The percent of households with an annual income within 50 percent of the median, they don't need any more cuts. They need dollars into education. They need dollars into R and D, research and development. They need to be able to ensure that the transportation and infrastructure of America is funded. That creates jobs. They don't need any more sequesters.

So the budget that we are about to engage in, the conference, should be a serious conference about ensuring that there is investment, because what we are suffering in the backdrop of mindless sequester continues on and on because we cannot get our friends to come to the table.

The Nation has been operating on a shrunken budget, slashed \$80 billion in forced spending cuts since March 1. And in the course of that, and while the middle class is gone, 57,000 children have been taken off the rolls of Head Start, and the numbers are growing. Poor families and working families that fall into the middle class are trying to strive to the middle class.

The cuts have also cut into public defenders and have cut into the justice system. The cuts have caused layoffs of lawyers. It has caused, in essence, an overturning of liberty justice.

And so in those ways, we can see pointedly the loss of the growth of the middle class.

Sequester is an across-the-board cut that does not allow the dream of Major

Owens and the Congressional Black Caucus, the infusion of dollars into higher education, Head Start, pre-K, primary, and secondary, title I funding. All of these fundings that are considered discretionary are slashed and burned. I want to see the growth of the American public—training for nurses, more training for medical professionals. All of that gets slashed in the sequester.

So, Mr. Speaker, you would wonder, what has America become? And I want to thank Mr. GARAMENDI from California for sharing this poster. What has America become?

Like the "Tale Two of Cities," they have not listened to the thoughtfulness of the Congressional Black Caucus budget that actually focuses on getting rid of the sequester so that we can not have a tale of two Americas. It hurts my heart to know that there are people in this country that are not benefiting from the greatness of the Nation.

Let me pause for a moment to make a simple statement: America is not broke. I am tired of people talking about how America is broke; a \$4 trillion economy, a larger economy than the European Union that includes many countries.

The ability to service our debt, let me just say to you: I don't like debt. I don't like the deficit. But, in actuality, in a capitalistic system, part of what churns the economy is the servicing of the debt. How do you have the money to service the debt? You infuse more capital, more dollars into the economy. You begin to sensibly talk about tax reform. You raise the revenue. You pay your bills. You build new roads. You help higher education. You pay for the military. You create opportunities for people to invent and build businesses. You create access to credit. You build more homes. That is how you turn the economy.

And so, tragically, from 2009 to 2012, the fraction of economic growth for the top 1 percent—not the 99ers, but the top 1 percent—according to this resource from the University of California, 95 percent went to the top 1 percent. They were growing beyond imagination.

□ 2100

Let me defend the top 1 percent to say that there are people in the top 1 percent that want to give back to the Nation. Warren Buffett wants to invest back into this country. Yet the economic structure of 2009–2012, when my Republican friends were in charge, was 95 percent going to the top 1 percent.

The preceding President, President Clinton, had an economy that included a sacrificial budget, that actually had a budget that did tax reform and revisions and had revenue. Thank goodness it was at least fair. The 1 percent were getting 45 percent and the bottom 99 percent were getting 55 percent.

What is the configuration now? I might venture to say, Mr. JEFFRIES, that the 99 percent are getting zero and

the top 1 percent may be right now at 100 percent.

So I am asking for the conference to go and work for America, not this configuration; to grow the 99 percent investment in America to be able to take the CBC budget and look at some of the tax reforms that could be utilized, to look at our job creation, which would include the maintenance and repair of public transit, highways, airports, ports, railroads, and bridges.

The Houston Metro would appreciate having the opportunity to expand and create jobs, from those who had worked on the rail lines to those who would build the railcars to those who would run it, and the opportunity for people going to work to ride on it.

Workforce development programs such as the Workforce Investment Act, programs and legislation that I have introduced in times of high unemployment to actually give those unemployed a stipend while they retrain and retrofit themselves into new jobs; veterans programs, which provide for investment in our veterans. One of the greatest gifts we could have given to the second generation of veterans was a second GI Bill that Democrats passed for the returning Iraqi and Afghan veterans. They provided opportunity.

So I simply come today with a number that, as I close, I wanted to leave. Maybe my friends in Texas will understand why this is so drastic. Because we are losing out of the gross domestic product in Texas some \$15.2 billion. We are losing 153,541 jobs in the State of Texas alone, someplace where they are celebrating that they are creating jobs and the economy is growing, but the sequester is causing the loss of jobs across America.

Tomorrow, we will be standing against the SNAP cuts that will be coming on November 1. Through Mr. Obama's and the Democratic Caucus' support, we passed stimulus that gave more food money to those who are in need. Why couldn't we simply keep that going? On November 1, because we have not acted, this Congress will shut down the food for those who have gotten just a little bit to feed their families.

So I am hoping that when they go to conference, what will be on their minds as they are pledging allegiance to the flag of the United States of America is not the 1 percent, but the 99 percent, and that we will come back out of this economy and there will not be a tale of two Americas, but one America, where everyone has an opportunity, and that the model of America—united—is an investment into more than just a few people, but to a lot of people, giving them the opportunity to build this economy.

I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank my constituents in Houston for understanding and recognizing that we must work together to build a better Houston, a better Texas, and a better America.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlelady from Texas for her

very powerful, strong, thoughtful, and comprehensive remarks.

Hopefully, as we move forward in this Congress with the conference committee that Representative LEE just discussed, they will take heed to her plea that you keep in mind those in America and the middle class and working families, those who aspire to be part of the middle class, and be compassionate as we move forward to address the issues that confront this Nation.

Earlier this month, as a result of the reckless behavior of some in this House of Representatives, we experienced 16 days of a government shutdown. It was a legislative joyride that was doomed to end in a crash-and-burn scenario, as it did. Unfortunately, as a result, the American people have been left with the damage of a \$24 billion hit to the economy in terms of lost economic productivity.

Thankfully, as a result of the agreement that reopened the government, both sides agreed to finally move forward with the appointment of negotiators to try and resolve differences in the House Republican budget and the Senate Democratic budget and move forward with a plan for America that both re-energizes our economy and deals with the long-term deficit problems that we will have to confront.

We believe the CBC budget that has been discussed here on the floor of the House of Representatives provides insight into the type of things that should be considered by the negotiators in the House and the Senate as they move forward.

I would note, parenthetically, that though the conference committee is just at the early stages of beginning, at this point in time, this process really should have occurred months and months ago. This House passed its budget in March. The Senate passed its budget shortly thereafter, and Democrats in the House and the Senate have been calling for the appointment of conferees since the early spring.

For some reason, there was a refusal amongst our friends on the other side of the aisle to move forward, but we are thankful that at this point there is an agreement finally to sit down. The American people have demanded that we attempt to find common ground to resolve the issues of concern for this great Nation.

Now there are two different approaches that have been put forth. Our approach is designed to deal with the deficit problems that we have in a balanced fashion. The other approach, I believe, is designed to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable people in other society: children, working families, the poor, the disabled, middle class folks, senior citizens.

Now some may say that is just hyperbole. Well, what does the budget on the other side of the aisle actually do? It cuts assistance pursuant to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,

or SNAP, by \$135 billion. That is not hyperbole. That is in the budget. In a country, at this moment, where 50 million people are hungry, 18 million of them are children.

The budget put forth by the other side of the aisle also cuts spending on higher education by \$168 billion. That is not hyperbole. That is in the budget. It makes it more difficult for young people in this great country to access the American Dream—young people who are already in a debt crisis. Student loan debt in this country exceeds \$1 trillion. We should be doing more to help people get a higher education, not less, in this country.

The document that was presented by the other side that will be subject to negotiation at the conference committee also cuts assistance and spending on Medicaid by the amount of \$810 billion. That is not hyperbole. That is in the House Republican budget. That is notwithstanding the fact that the majority of people who benefit from Medicaid assistance in this country are actually children and the disabled and senior citizens.

So we have got very different priorities, blueprints, road maps as it relates to dealing with the problems that we confront here in America.

The balanced approach that we advocate for essentially has four different elements.

First, we believe it is important to invest in the American economy. It is time to invest in America, invest in job training and education, transportation and infrastructure, research and development, and technology and innovation.

Let's invest in America so we can create increased economic activity. We are in the midst of a very schizophrenic economic recovery. It is a recovery that has disproportionately benefited the wealthy in America.

Let's just look at the facts that have been laid before us.

We have got corporate profits that are way up. The stock market is way up. CEO compensation is way up. Productivity of the American worker is way up. Yet wages have remained stagnant, and unemployment is still stubbornly high.

Working families and middle class folks have been left behind in the context of this recovery. That is why we believe the first element of any budget has to invest in America. Because if you invest in America, you increase economic activity. If you increase economic activity, you raise consumer demand. If you raise consumer demand, the economy grows. If the economy grows, by definition, the deficit will be reduced.

Parenthetically, let me also note that despite all the rhetoric from some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, under this administration, Barack Obama, the deficit has actually been reduced by half during his 5 years in office. In fact, I think as a percentage of GDP, the deficit has been reduced to a degree that has not been

seen since the drawdown in the aftermath of World War II. So we hear a lot about fiscal irresponsibility directed at the White House, notwithstanding the fact that this White House has presided over a near historic level of deficit reduction.

Invest in the economy.

The second thing that is important is that we should get rid of some wasteful corporate loopholes that have outlived their usefulness. We can just close or change or modify some of the benefits that oil and gas companies have received. They are making record profits. There is no reason for the loopholes and the benefits and the subsidies that exist right now. If we just were to address them, we could save the American people \$25 billion over the next 10 years. If we were to change some of the loopholes that actually incentivize companies to move jobs overseas, we could save the American people \$168 billion over the next 10 years.

If there is such a moral imperative not to saddle our children with the debt burden that we have in America, if that is such a moral imperative, can't we not agree upon a single loophole that can be closed in the name of the children and the grandchildren of America? Not one?

That is what we believe is the right thing to do here in the CBC.

□ 2115

The third thing that, I think, is part of a balanced approach to dealing with the budget and a reduction in the deficit has to do with making some spending cuts where appropriate, but we have got to do it in a manner that is sensitive to the fragile nature of the economy. I think all of us on this side of the aisle are willing to concede that there are probably some areas in which efficiencies can be found in the name of fiscal responsibility for the American people. Spending reduction sensitive to the fragile nature of our recovery should be part of any balanced approach in dealing with the problems that we face in America.

Lastly, we in the CBC certainly believe that any budget agreement has to stand up for important social safety net programs in America, like Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid—programs that have been phenomenally successful, particularly in reducing poverty amongst older Americans. It is unfortunate because there are times when these programs—Social Security and Medicare—are unfairly demonized and are made part of deficit reduction talks even if the facts suggest they don't necessarily have a place in that regard. Social Security, for instance, remains a solvent program at this moment and into the foreseeable future. Social Security has nothing to do with the deficit. That, in fact, was a statement that Ronald Reagan made in 1984 in a debate with Walter Mondale. It was true then, and it is true almost 30 years later.

Now, when you think about the attack on our social safety net programs

and on the obsessive desire to change—decimate—so-called entitlement programs, often this discussion is raised in the context of the enormous debt problem that we have in America—\$16.7 trillion. Certainly it is a problem that we have got to confront in this country, but what also is often not clear is the fact that spending on so-called entitlement programs really does not account for the debt problem that we confront in America. This is what this poster board and the chart so clearly illustrate.

In fact, much of the debt that we currently confront in this America can be tied directly to policies emanating from the 8 years that George W. Bush was at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. More than half of our debt can be traced to the failed war in Iraq—totally unjustified in search of weapons of mass destruction that still haven't been found and never will be found. The debt can be tied to the war in Afghanistan and to the fact that it was mis-prosecuted as a result of being distracted by the joyride that took place in Iraq, costing lives and American treasure. The debt problem can be traced to the Bush tax cuts passed in this Congress in 2001 and 2003 without being paid for.

Then, of course, was the laissez-faire attitude toward Wall Street, resulting in reckless behavior by some that collapsed the economy, robbed millions and millions of Americans of the little wealth that they had tied into homeownership, and the resulting bailout that took place and the need for an economic stimulus package through the Recovery Act. All of that accounts for a significant amount of the debt that we now confront.

So when both sides sit down at the negotiating table in the context of the Budget Committee, we should do so with the facts objectively established as opposed to putting a bull's-eye on the back of important social safety net programs like Social Security and Medicare just because some folks in this Capitol don't like those programs from their very inceptions.

The last observation that I will make is that the budget that has been set forth by the CBC and by Democrats in the House and the Senate, as compared to the budget that has been put forth by the House GOP, is very different in the context of how we review and evaluate tax fairness in America.

I think some would be surprised to know that, in the House GOP budget, it cuts taxes by lowering the top tax rate for high-income Americans from 39.6 percent to 25 percent. This is not the Reagan budget, supply-side economics. This is not George Herbert Walker Bush or George W. Bush in 2001 and 2003. This is the current budget on which we are going to have to negotiate and find common ground. It cuts the tax rate from 39.6 percent to 25 percent in order to slash all of the social safety net programs that we reviewed earlier.

Why is that a wrong-headed policy?

As I close, and as this chart illustrates, the top tax rate was at 39.6 percent notwithstanding the fact that so many people on the other side of the aisle, in good faith, constantly say, that type of tax rate is the type of rate that hurts the economy. Under the 8 years of the Clinton administration, with a 39.6 percent top tax rate, 20-plus million jobs were created; 8 years later, when the top tax rate was cut by this Congress from 39.6 percent to 35 percent, we lost 580,000 jobs. That is an apples-to-apples comparison that discredits the notion that lowering the tax rate somehow stimulates growth in the economy when the 8 years of the Clinton administration as compared to the 8 years of the Bush administration clearly discredit that theory in the manner that a former President referred to as voodoo economics.

So I am just hopeful that, as we move forward with this conference committee—we have got big differences—we can sit down and endeavor to find common ground and do the business of the American people: keep government open, invest in our economy, protect our social safety net programs, and help create prosperity for the greatest number of Americans possible.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE SECRET OF AMERICA'S SUCCESS—TECHNOLOGY AND FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) for 30 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, in the words of my former boss, President Reagan, Well, here we go again.

Over the last 25 years, I and a small band of “just refuse to go along and get along” types here in Congress have engaged in a constant fight to maintain the intellectual property of American inventors.

The intellectual property rights of our inventors is something that has been a great treasure to our country. Our Founding Fathers felt so strongly about technology and freedom—and, yes, with the profit motive—that that was the formula that would uplift human kind, and they believed in it so much that they wrote that into our Constitution.

Article I, section 8, clause 8 of the Constitution:

The Congress shall have power to promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.

I might add that this is the only place in the body of the Constitution in which the word “right” is used.

The Bill of Rights comes in during the amendment process of the Constitution, but our Founding Fathers thought so highly of technology and technology advancement that the right

of inventors was included in the body of the Constitution.

This provision has served America well. It has led to general prosperity that we would not have had otherwise. It has led to national security where we have faced foes that have outnumbered us so heavily, but what were heavily relied upon were the technologies that were developed to help our Armed Forces defend themselves and, thus, defend the country. Of course, this has served us well because the technology and the freedom we have has created a society in which ordinary people—decent people—can live very fruitful lives and can enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Americans work hard, but this wasn't just created by hard work. That is the important thing to remember. Without hardworking Americans, it wouldn't have worked; but it was the technology that they used that made the difference. People work hard all over the world. They work long hours, and they live in poverty and deprivation, but we coupled the hard work of our people with technology; and, thus, what we have had is a success that has uplifted the common man and has served as a light of hope for all human beings in that we can produce the wealth needed for regular people to lead decent lives. So that is the secret of America's success—technology and freedom—and, yes, perhaps we could include the right values.

It was our strong patent system and a respect for law that made the difference in that technology and freedom. Yet, today, multinational corporations run by Americans want to diminish patent protection in the United States. We have had the strongest patent protection of any country in the world; yet we have had for these last 25 years major, major efforts to diminish the patent protection that we have and to harmonize it with the rest of the world. It just happens that the European and Japanese patent systems are much weaker and offer less protection for the inventors. Over the years, we have had to fight back and have had to turn back efforts to weaken the patent system a number of times, and I have been part of that effort and part of that struggle.

I remember when, for example, they had a bill—it was so blatant that we defeated it—called the Patent Publication Act. They said, after 18 months, if someone hasn't filed for a patent, even if he were not going to get his patent, they were going to publish his patent application, meaning all the secrets would be out in the world. They tried to push that over on us. We just barely defeated that, but we defeated it in a bipartisan effort that was led by MARCY KAPTUR and me, Chris Cox, Tom Campbell, and others at that time.

Then there was the effort, of course, to say that, as soon as one files for a patent application, after 20 months, the ticking of the clock starts, and you could end up then with maybe 5 years

of patent protection by the time it was issued.

□ 2130

Here we had always said 17 years after you are given the patent you then lose control, but you have 17 years where you own your patent. They tried to change that and could have changed it in a way that somebody, if it took the Patent Office 15 years or 10 years to develop a concept of a new idea and to figure out how to patent it, well, then that person would only have 2 years left.

These were the ways that they were trying to destroy the patent rights that our people have enjoyed. Sometimes we turned those efforts back, other times we had to compromise, and other times, like last time around, we lost. For example, over our objection this body changed the fundamental principle that patents were to be given to the first to invent. If someone has invented it, they should be given the patent. That has been the fundamental guiding post ever since our country was founded. We changed that last year. We changed that to say, not first to invent, but the first person who files for the patent.

Of course, at an age when you have people who are able to sneak in on your computers and there are hackers around, that could turn out to be a catastrophe. Already we could hear rumblings of that from China where patents are being churned out and patent applications are being put in. And, yes, if they can prove they were the first one, and even if they found out about it some other way and can't explain it, no, they get the patent over the people who have done the work.

Well, once again I find myself fighting for the small inventors and struggling to defend the patent rights of these people to own and control their own invention. What we have got now is a bill that has been introduced and that is just making its way. There will be a hearing on it tomorrow in the Judiciary Committee.

There has always been an excuse to change the fundamentals of the way our system works, because we have had the strongest patent system in the world and they have always tried to find some excuse of changing it and there is some sinister force at play that demands that we change the fundamentals of our patent system. Well, we have heard it before.

For example, they claimed there were "submarine patents." That is a derogatory term. A submarine patent, that must be undercover or something suspicious about that. They used that as an excuse to try to limit the time people owned their patent. They used that as an excuse to publish everybody's patent application even before it was issued.

This time, the new word, the new bugaboo that they are talking about and the scary word for the day is "patent troll." "Patent troll" is being used

as a word—and they probably hired a very sophisticated public relations company to come up with that "patent troll" term—they have been used to fundamentally change our patent system, again, in order to diminish and damage the rights of small inventors. They can't say that that is their purpose, so they have to come up with a scary word like "patent troll."

These so-called patent trolls are patent holders or they are companies which represent patent holders, meaning people who own patents. They are engaged in defending the rights of those patents that they own. They purchased these patents or their companies purchased these patents basically from small inventors who didn't have the resources to defend and to enforce their own patent rights. These small inventors are now the partners of some of these companies or some of these individual investors. But it comes down to this: the inventor or the investor owns those patents. If you buy a piece of land or a patent from someone, you have that right. These patents that they own are just like any other patent granted by the Patent Office.

But huge corporate infringers would have us believe that these patents are in some way unfair or evil. So what makes these patents different than the good patents that these very same corporations own? There are no differences. They are the same patents, the same kind of patents. Some of these multinational corporations have bought patents from small inventors. They own that and they enforce them through a type of legal action when they are infringed upon. The multinational corporations have coined the scare terms "patent assertion entity," or PAE; they have coined "nonpracticing entity," NPE; and, of course, all of that means "patent troll."

The PR blitz, as I say, which was obviously created by a public relations company who made a lot of money coming up with that boogeyman, is used to change the basic legal protection of American inventors and, yes, change the legal protection of people who have bought the legal rights and own the intellectual property rights that they bought from the inventor.

I suppose Halloween is the proper time to talk about scary trolls. How frightening. The so-called patent troll has been identified as being out for a profit from technology that he did not invent. My, my, someone who is trying to receive a profit by making an investment into something that they didn't build themselves. Huh? Doesn't that describe banks and insurance companies and everybody else who puts investments down and hopes that they are going to have a return from those investments? But they, themselves, aren't making anything. They are using money and paper and contracts and helping people who need help.

I have consulted with a number of outside individual inventors and groups, and they have reaffirmed that

the legislation being proposed by the Judiciary Committee further disadvantages the little guy against the deep-pocketed, multinational corporations. This is achieved in the guise of targeting the so-called patent trolls. Pay attention to the patent trolls, but don't pay attention to how this weakens the small inventor.

This means that persons or companies who have contracted with inventors who really need the help to see that his or her patent rights are respected are going to be undercut. How horrible it is of making business out of helping small inventors see to it that their patent rights are enforced.

Proponents of this legislation are covering up the fact that they have stolen someone else's patent rights and now want to change the system so they can get away with it so that someone whose patent rights they don't own, that they have blatantly just arrogantly grabbed and put into their own technology projects, that they don't have to pay for it. When they are challenged in court, they complain, Oh, this is a patent troll. No. What we have here is large companies who are willing to take from the little guy which will in the end, yes, maybe be of short-term help to those companies, but it will undermine the progress of the United States of America, undermine our ability to create a wealth in our society that will make sure that our people can out-compete foreigners. Most of the corporations who are complaining about this are multinational corporations run, of course, by Americans, sometimes not.

Often the only way that a small business inventor can enforce his patent rights is by hiring a patent assertion entity as an advocate, meaning a patent troll. Sometimes the big guys want to simply steal the idea and say, sue me, because these little guys, these small inventors, the mainspring of so many ideas, they don't have the money to fight the big corporations. Now the big corporations want to make it impossible for them by changing the very law that protects them and protects what they have created in their invention.

One of the biggest alleged crimes of these nonpracticing entities is that they don't actually make anything, but just shift money around. Like I say, how horrible that is that some people make money in our society although you can't really see what they actually make with their hands. Banks, lawyers, investment companies, insurance companies, well, they make money, but they don't necessarily make things, but they are important to our economy. Even more important to our economy are those inventors. If we change the rules so that big companies can steal from them, those inventors will not be there in the next generation to come with the creations that uplift our people and defend our country and permit us to have security and prosperity.

We are told that trolls are different. Well, let's put it this way: the trolls are different. They are trying to make money off something they didn't actually make themselves. They aren't trying, as our multinational corporations are trying to do, to infringe on other people's property rights. Look who is pointing the fingers. The arrogance of these megacompanies warning us against small investors having the help of some investor is nauseating.

These attacks on the rights of patent holders are seen as valid and virtuous, but if they happened against any other rights, they would be identified as the problem they are.

Remember the big groups that are angry because they used patented technology without paying the owners, justifying it on the idea of the lack of the owner's enforcement. These companies say, Well, the patent wasn't being enforced, so we can use it. Now they are really upset when someone wants to enforce that patent. Now the rights for the patent are being enforced by someone who paid the inventor to sell him that property right.

A landowner who chooses not to develop a farm or land could be described as a nonpracticing entity. Should we make it simpler and easier for others to take or steal the land because that owner isn't using it? Should we make it harder for him to continue to own his land simply because he doesn't use it or isn't using it like others would want him to? How about a music lover who purchases the rights to a song or an entire catalog of an artist's songs, should we make it hard for him to defend his ownership rights because he wasn't the musician, he didn't make the music himself?

This campaign by multinational corporations and some of the world's richest men is an attack on the little guy's right to sell his intellectual property or to partner with someone else who can help him defend what is rightfully his.

While I don't have time to go through all of the problems of this legislation point by point, I will refer to several problems brought up in this bill.

The claim that this legislation is designed to go after patent trolls, to make these patent trolls more accountable, that is what they claim, but how are they doing it? They are doing it by making it harder for every patent holder to defend his patent rights, every ordinary American. They claim they are making it easier and less costly to defend baseless claims of patent infringement. Well, they claim these are bad patents that should never have been issued. They claim many things.

Section 3 of this bill, for example, makes it easier to defend against false charges of patent infringement, but it also adds significant new burdens onto a patent holder who seeks to defend, rightfully seeks to defend, his patent rights. In addition, this section increases the potential downside risk of

suing to defend one's own patent rights.

We should be doing everything we can to make the system quick, cheap, and simple to defend, both to defend patent rights and to defend against baseless charges of infringement. But this legislation is primarily geared toward making it harder, more costly, and more time intensive to file claims of infringement. That is exactly the wrong direction to take.

The added pleading requirements will also require a very thorough and expensive pre-filing discovery processes, again, discouraging underfunded patent holders from defending their patents. While there are limitations on a fishing trip type of discovery that may hold costs down and also protect patent holders from discovery IP, those protections don't overcome the provisions which make it more difficult to defend perfectly respectable patents.

In addition, by moving to what is essentially a "loser pays" system, which is what this legislation is attempting, the little guy is once again put at great risk when suing a big corporation for infringement. So now the inventor who is being victimized may have to risk everything that he owns to pay the legal fees of his much better financed corporate infringers.

This concept of fee shifting is alien to this country's history but very common in Europe. It has been demonstrated to have a chilling effect on litigation at the expense of the rights of those who can't afford to sue because they can't afford to lose.

The corporations, they can afford to lose. They are not personally having to pay anything; but the small inventor, he will lose everything in his life if he loses. He will owe them that much money. The big corporations, of course, are very capable of handling their own legal fees.

□ 2145

Section 4 requires a patent holder who believes they are being infringed upon to disclose all of his partners, assignees, and other information to court and to the Patent Office as well, and to the accused infringers. Well, what we have then, if you sue somebody because they are stealing your intellectual property, you have to give up all of your privacy rights and from that point on, you are an open book to anyone who is your competition, anyone who is your adversary, and they will probably, as we see happen with large corporations, you now are wide open to victimization by the corporates.

Section 5 seems to repeal a current provision that guarantees a patent holder's right to sue a State, for example. If a State or the government infringes on your patent, there seems to be a provision in the bill that could say that you can't sue to get paid for what the government has stolen from you. That, of course, has to be looked at, and looked at by the court.

Section 9 claims to make technical corrections to the bill, but they make

sweeping, wholesale changes to the way patent applicants and patent holders are allowed to pursue their rights. One of these so-called minor corrections entirely removes section 145 from the law, which allows patent applicants to bring suit in civil court if they are not getting due consideration at the Patent Office. In other words, if the government employees at the Patent Office are blatantly not doing their job for some reason, whether it is corruption or incompetency, the patent applicant now by this rule, by this bill, will not be able to seek justice in the court system. This is totally inconsistent with what our national tradition is all about.

Removing section 145 concentrates all decisional power within the Patent Office, with the exception of an appeal to the circuit, which is required to give deference to the Patent Office through that process. That is exactly the opposite of what we want to do. We want to make sure that people have a legal right, if our government is off base, to appeal it to another branch of government. That's why we have the judicial and the legislative and the executive branches of government. Here again, part of the bill is going in exactly the wrong direction.

A review of this legislation titled "A Small Business and Startup Perspective on the Goodlatte Patent Bill," this is an analysis of the patent bill that we are talking about:

would gratuitously repeal 35 U.S.C. section 145, which has long protected patent applicants' fundamental right of de novo judicial review of adverse patentability determinations by the Patent Office.

They note here that since 1836, anybody could repeal a decision within the Patent Office, but now they want to take that away, diminish the rights of our inventors, which will mean that we will not have the same type of innovation and creativity that we have enjoyed in this country.

All of this is being done on the notion that these evil trolls are driving up the number of patent litigations. An independent report from the World Intellectual Property Organization, as well as a study from the U.S. Government Accountability Office, says that is not true. So-called trolls may be backing up the little guys, but that is not a major cause of litigation.

So we have the experts telling us that their excuse is wrong, and the GAO suggests that there are many things we can do, but what is being suggested in this bill and others is going exactly the wrong way.

The bottom line is these provisions make it more difficult for the patent holder to defend his rights and raises the stakes so that the downside of pursuing an infringement in cases becomes more costly. We are hurting the little guy. We are making it difficult for the mainspring of human progress. The ideas, the creativity of our country and our countrymen can be brought to play to uplift the lives of our people, to create more energy, to create higher quality goods, to make sure that we com-

pete with the hordes of people in Africa and China and India.

Instead, if we are going to do that, we have to have the best technology, and we are taking our great national asset of a Patent Office that has helped our country over the years, has helped us keep our country safe by producing the best defense technology, to keep ourselves competitive so that the average American can outproduce their counterparts overseas—we are now going to take what has given us that ability, which is the genius of our inventors, and we are going to squash it by giving in to corporate interests of multinational corporations that are not owing their allegiance to us, but instead owe their allegiance to their company, which they see now as an international company, not even an American company.

I ask my colleagues to pay close attention to this legislation and to join me in rejecting this attempt to diminish the fundamental property rights, intellectual property rights of the American people in the name of some troll or some scary title that would get us away from the basic fundamentals of what is being proposed. I would ask my colleagues to join me in opposing this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ADERHOLT (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today and the balance of the week on account of an illness in the family.

Mr. COOPER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and October 29 and 30 on account of the death of a family member.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 51 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, October 29, 2013, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3399. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Methyl Parathion; Removal of Expired Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2009-0332; FRL-9401-3] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

3400. A letter from the Chief Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility; Connecticut: Ansonia, City of, New Haven County; [Docket ID: FEMA-2013-0002] [Internal Agency Docket No.: FEMA-8301] received October 7, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3401. A letter from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Extension of Temporary Registration of Municipal Advisors [Release No.: 34-70468; File No. S7-19-10] (RIN: 3235-AK69) received September 26, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

3402. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Quality: Revision to Definition of Volatile Organic Compounds — Exclusion of 2,3,3,3-tetrafluoropropene [EPA-HQ-OAR-2010-0605; FRL-9900-53-OAR] (RIN: 2060-AR70) received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3403. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule for the Update of the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets for the Lancaster 1997 8-Hour Ozone Maintenance Area [EPA-R03-OAR-2013-0058; FRL-9901-21-Region 3] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3404. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; West Virginia's Redesignation Request for the Wheeling, WV-OH 1997 Annual Fine Particulate Matter Nonattainment Area to Attainment and Approval of the Associated Maintenance Plan [EPA-R03-OAR-2012-0368; FRL-9901-41-Region 3] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3405. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Washington: Thurston County Second 10-Year PM10 Limited Maintenance Plan [EPA-R10-OAR-2013-0088; FRL-9901-34-Region 10] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3406. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — FD&C Blue No. 1; Exemptions from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0568; FRL-9396-1] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3407. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — FD&C Yellow No. 5; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2012-0945; FRL-9400-6] received September 25, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3408. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Maintenance, Testing, and Replacement of Vented Lead-Acid Storage Batteries for Nuclear Power Plants Regulatory Guide 1.129 Revision received September 27, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3409. A letter from the Director, International Cooperation, Department of Defense, transmitting Pursuant to Section 27(f)

of the Arms Export Control Act and Section 1(f) of Executive Order 11958, Transmittal No. 11-13 informing of an intent to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Defense of Australia; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3410. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting consistent with the provisions of 22 U.S.C. Section 2291-4, as amended, a copy of Presidential Determination No. 2014-02 determining that Brazil meets the statutory requirements relating to the interdiction of aircraft reasonably suspected to be engaged in illicit drug trafficking; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

3411. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3412. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, Department of Transportation, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3413. A letter from the Director, Office of Human Resources, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting five reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3414. A letter from the Special Counsel, Office of Special Counsel, transmitting the Office's annual report for FY 2012; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3415. A letter from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting information and documents related to the Department's Civil Rights Division's efforts to ensure that the State of Louisiana complies with the longstanding court orders requiring it to desegregate its public schools; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

3416. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting a letter notifying the Congress that the Department will no longer enforce section 101(3) and 101(31) of title 38; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

3417. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's report entitled, "Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Activities, Progress, and Plans"; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Science, Space, and Technology.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 391. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 992) to amend provisions in section 716 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act relating to Federal assistance for swaps entities, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2374) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes (Rept. 113-253). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following

titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. NORTON (for herself and Mr. ISSA):

H.R. 3343. A bill to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to clarify the rules regarding the determination of the compensation of the Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 3344. A bill to ensure that the provision of foreign assistance does not contribute to human trafficking and to combat human trafficking by requiring greater transparency in the recruitment of foreign workers; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ISSA (for himself, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MICA, Mr. CHAFFETZ, and Ms. SPEIER):

H.R. 3345. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to consolidate suspension and debarment offices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself, Mr. ADERHOLT, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER):

H.R. 3346. A bill to amend chapter 83 of title 41, United States Code, to increase the requirement for American-made content, to strengthen the waiver provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 3347. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to report on the disaster assistance obligations of the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BARTON (for himself, Mr. GOHMERT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. FLORES, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. PERRY, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BARR, Mr. SCALISE, and Mr. FLEMING):

H.R. 3348. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make the individual health insurance mandate voluntary in 2014, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. WATT, and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia):

H.R. 3349. A bill to provide for the permanent funding of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. UPTON (for himself, Mr. HALL, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. OLSON, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HARPER, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. CASSIDY, Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. WALDEN, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LONG, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. LANCE, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. BARTON, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. LATTI, Mr. TERRY, Mr. MCKINLEY, and Mr. SHIMKUS):

H.R. 3350. A bill to authorize health insurance issuers to continue to offer for sale current individual health insurance coverage in satisfaction of the minimum essential health insurance coverage requirement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be

subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. CLARKE):

H.R. 3351. A bill to assist survivors of stroke and other debilitating health occurrences in returning to work; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself and Mr. ROONEY):

H.R. 3352. A bill to amend the Honoring the Families of Fallen Soldiers Act to provide a permanent appropriation of funds for the payment of death gratuities and related benefits for survivors of deceased military service members in event of any future period of lapsed appropriations; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. WATERS, Ms. CLARKE, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HOLT, Mr. POCAN, Mr. TIERNEY, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. TONKO, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. MOORE, Mr. HONDA, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Mr. McDERMOTT):

H.R. 3353. A bill to amend the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to extend the period during which supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits are temporarily increased; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Mrs. LOWEY):

H.R. 3354. A bill to require that spent nuclear fuel be stored in certified dry cask storage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GUTHRIE:

H.R. 3355. A bill to increase the competitiveness of American manufacturing by reducing regulatory and other burdens, encouraging greater innovation and investment, and developing a stronger workforce for the twenty-first century, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Armed Services, Education and the Workforce, Natural Resources, House Administration, the Judiciary, Rules, Appropriations, Science, Space, and Technology, and Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HARRIS:

H.R. 3356. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to apply the prohibition against the conversion of contributions to personal use to contributions to political committees, to clarify that contributions accepted by political committees may be used for authorized expenditures in connection with their political activities and for other lawful purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Ms. MENG (for herself and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 3357. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to States to improve the knowledge, credentials, compensation, and professional development of early childhood educators working with children in early childhood education programs; to

the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3358. A bill to provide for an exemption from the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act for individuals residing in States in which the Exchange Websites are not fully functional, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. RADEL (for himself, Mr. COOK, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. MESSER, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. JONES, Mr. ROKITA, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. GARRETT):

H.R. 3359. A bill to provide for a delay of the individual mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act until the American Health Benefit Exchanges are functioning properly; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 3360. A bill to reform Article 32 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice to specify the burden of proof applicable at the investigative hearing, the required qualifications for the investigating officer, the permitted scope of the investigation to assist the convening authority, and the protection of witnesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana:

H.J. Res. 99. A joint resolution relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 on October 17, 2013; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. AL GREEN of Texas (for himself, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. HAHN, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CLAY, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. FUDGE, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. MOORE, Mr. WATT, Ms. WATERS, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CLYBURN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. DELBENE, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. BASS, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RUSH, Mr. LEWIS, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Ms. TITUS):

H. Res. 392. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should continue to raise awareness of domestic violence and its devastating effects on individuals, families, and communities, and support programs designed to end domestic violence in the United States; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

150. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan, relative to House Resolution No. 30 urging the Congress to enact amendments to the federal Electronic Communications Privacy Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 3343.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 17 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 3344.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 3345.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article One of the United States Constitution, section 8, clause 18: the Necessary and Proper Clause.

By Mr. LIPINSKI:

H.R. 3346.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3: The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 3347.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution, "[t]o pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States"

By Mr. BARTON:

H.R. 3348.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 3349.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article 1, section 8, clause 8

By Mr. UPTON:

H.R. 3350.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 3351.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the

United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 3352.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 1 and Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 3353.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8. The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States;

By Mr. ENGEL:

H.R. 3354.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. GUTHRIE:

H.R. 3355.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1—The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excise, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States;

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3—To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;

By Mr. HARRIS:

H.R. 3356.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution, which grants Congress the authority to make laws governing the time, places and manner of holding federal elections.

By Ms. MENG:

H.R. 3357.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. MESSER:

H.R. 3358.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, which empowers Congress, in part, to "lay and collect Taxes" and "provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States" The bill will exempt certain individuals, who through no fault of their own, will be subject to taxes imposed by Public Law 111-148, as amended. Congress has the power to delay such taxes and provide for the general welfare of those who have been and will be harmed by their imposition.

By Mr. RADEL:

H.R. 3359.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 3360.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

ARTICLE I, SECTION 8

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana:

H.J. Res. 99.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 relating to the power to pay the debts of the United States.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

- H.R. 15: Mr. DENHAM and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 29: Mr. JEFFRIES.
H.R. 164: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 184: Mr. DINGELL.
H.R. 272: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. BARBER, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. ENYART, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Ms. DUCKWORTH.
H.R. 320: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 351: Mr. LANKFORD.
H.R. 375: Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 411: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 460: Mr. GIBSON.
H.R. 485: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 541: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 556: Mr. REED.
H.R. 666: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 669: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 685: Mr. HARPER, Mr. HIMES, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 715: Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. JORDAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. HONDA, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. DELAURO, and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 721: Mr. BARROW of Georgia and Mr. HUNTER.
H.R. 851: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 855: Mr. PASCARELL.
H.R. 920: Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 924: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 962: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. TONKO, Ms. WATERS, and Ms. MCCOLLUM.
H.R. 1009: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1015: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1024: Ms. SINEMA.
H.R. 1041: Mr. MAFFEI.
H.R. 1077: Mr. NUNNELEE.
H.R. 1091: Mr. MULVANEY and Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 1094: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 1095: Mr. BARBER, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 1098: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 1148: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 1175: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 1176: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 1199: Mr. VEASEY and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 1240: Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 1313: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 1317: Mr. COHEN and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 1354: Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. ANDREWS, and Mr. SALMON.
H.R. 1473: Mr. THOMPSON of California and Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 1528: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 1563: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 1634: Mr. TERRY.
H.R. 1652: Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. FATTAH, and Mr. NEAL.
H.R. 1666: Mr. GUTHRIE.
H.R. 1726: Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. PERRY, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DAINES, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. CAPUANO.
H.R. 1731: Mr. MURPHY of Florida and Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 1732: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 1744: Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 1750: Mr. HARRIS.
H.R. 1755: Mr. RUNYAN.
H.R. 1761: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona and Mr. TONKO.
H.R. 1779: Mr. PETERS of Michigan and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 1795: Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 1803: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 1805: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 1843: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1953: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 1984: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1985: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 1992: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1998: Ms. SLAUGHTER and Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2026: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 2027: Mr. HUELSKAMP.
H.R. 2028: Mr. BERA of California, Mr. TONKO, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 2037: Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. MORAN, and Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 2041: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2043: Mr. WAXMAN.
H.R. 2046: Mr. GOSAR, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas.
H.R. 2066: Mr. AMODEI and Mr. PETRI.
H.R. 2144: Mr. LATHAM.
H.R. 2159: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2223: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H.R. 2248: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 2274: Mr. MCHENRY.
H.R. 2278: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. BARTON, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. LAMALFA.
H.R. 2300: Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 2328: Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 2358: Mr. O'ROURKE and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 2368: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2369: Ms. BASS.
H.R. 2426: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 2429: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 2452: Mr. MORAN.
H.R. 2510: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2590: Mr. REED.
H.R. 2591: Mr. DOGGETT and Mr. SCHOCK.
H.R. 2632: Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 2656: Mr. HANNA.
H.R. 2663: Ms. SCHWARTZ.
H.R. 2697: Ms. FUDGE, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2725: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. ISSA, Mr. POLIS, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 2805: Mr. GOSAR.
H.R. 2810: Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 2822: Mr. LEWIS and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 2825: Mr. HOLT, Mr. HONDA, and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2839: Mr. ENYART and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 2866: Ms. Frankel of Florida, Mr. GOSAR, and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 2870: Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 2907: Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2941: Mr. ENYART, Mr. RUIZ, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 2959: Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. JONES, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.
H.R. 2981: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. ESTY, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. HANNA, Mr. HALL, Mr. PETERS of California, and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 2992: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 3035: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 3040: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 3043: Mr. YODER.
H.R. 3077: Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, and Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 3083: Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 3097: Ms. WATERS.
H.R. 3111: Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. PAULSEN, Mrs. ELLMERS, Ms. FOXX, and Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 3112: Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 3118: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3121: Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. WOODALL, and Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 3143: Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York.
H.R. 3163: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 3179: Mr. GARDNER.
H.R. 3206: Mr. KEATING, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, and Mr. McDERMOTT.
H.R. 3211: Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. BARR.
H.R. 3279: Mr. LABRADOR and Mr. MULLIN.
H.R. 3297: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3304: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. VEASEY, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H.R. 3308: Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. BARLETTA, Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. COBLE, Mr. COLE, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. COOK, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. FORBES, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. GERLACH, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Mr. HALL, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUCAS, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. PERRY, Mr. PETRI, Mr. PITTS, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. ROONEY, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. TERRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. TURNER, Mr. UPTON, Mr. WALBERG, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. YOHO, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 3310: Mr. KIND, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 3316: Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 3323: Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. RICHMOND, and Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 3325: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 3329: Mr. VEASEY.
H.R. 3336: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. KEATING, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.
H.R. 3337: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.J. Res. 34: Mr. TONKO.
H.J. Res. 98: Mr. BENTIVOLIO.
H. Con. Res. 34: Mr. COHEN.
H. Con. Res. 61: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. SLAUGHTER, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H. Res. 36: Mr. SANFORD.
H. Res. 97: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H. Res. 109: Mr. FATTAH and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H. Res. 147: Mr. CAMPBELL.
H. Res. 227: Mr. HONDA.
H. Res. 276: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. HANNA, Mr. MAFFEI, Mr. NEAL, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Ms. NORTON.
H. Res. 302: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H. Res. 326: Mr. STOCKMAN and Mr. BARLETTA.
H. Res. 345: Mr. MORAN.
H. Res. 356: Mr. VALADAO, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Mr. ENYART, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H. Res. 387: Mr. POE of Texas.
H. Res. 388: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, and Mr. RANGEL.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

OFFERED BY MR. CAMP.

The provisions that warranted a referral to the Committee on Ways and Means in H.J. Res. 99, relating to the disapproval of the President's exercise of authority to suspend the debt limit, as submitted under section 1002(b) of the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2014 and October 17, 2013, do not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in

clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The amendment to be offered by Representative GEORGE MILLER of California, or a designee to H.R. 2374, the Retail Investor Protection Act, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.